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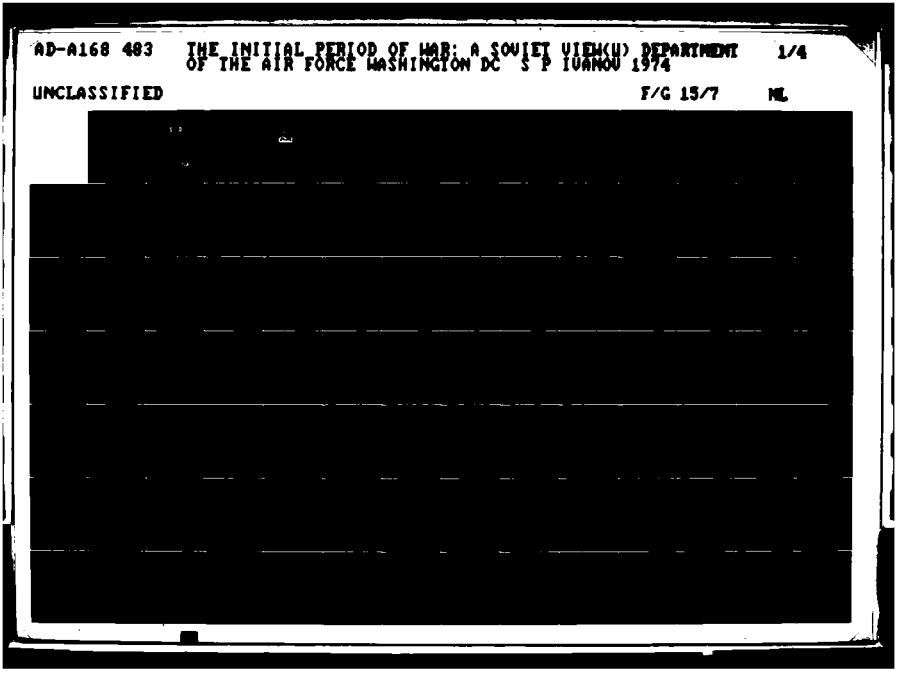

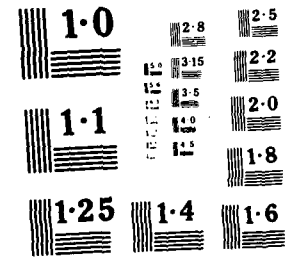
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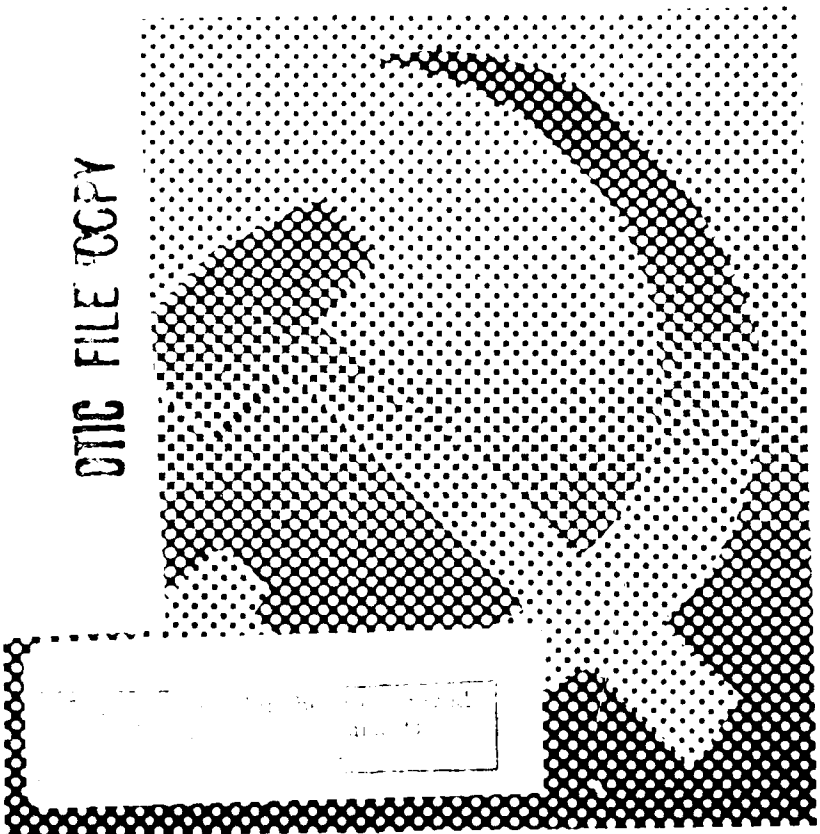

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НАЧАЛЬНЫЙ ПЕРИОД ВОЙНЫ

(По опыту первых кампаний и операций второй мировой войны)

Под общей редакцией
генерала армии
С. П. ИВАНОВА

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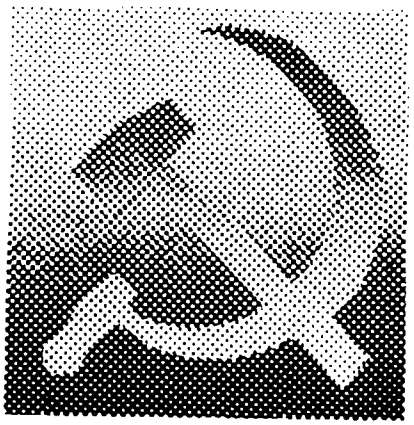

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The translation and publication of **The Initial Period of War** does not constitute approval by any U.S. Government organization of the inferences, findings, and conclusions contained therein. Publication is solely for the exchange and stimulation of ideas.

Introduction

World War II, unleashed by the imperialist nations, brought the peoples of the world untold suffering and sacrifice. It took more than 50 million lives and caused tremendous material losses. Especially great losses were suffered in this war by the Soviet people, who made the decisive contribution in defeating the imperialist aggressors and in liberating the peoples of the world from the threat of fascist enslavement. The peoples of the world have not forgotten the lessons of the last war and are raising their voices with increasing determination in support of the Peace Program advanced by the 24th CPSU Congress.* Because of the increased power and international influence of the Soviet Union and the entire socialist community, and because of the efforts of peace-loving forces, a relaxation of tensions has taken shape in international relations, and a whole system of agreements and treaties has emerged. These are laying the foundation for constructive relations between socialist and capitalist nations. However, in the capitalist world there are still influential forces opposed to detente. "It will no doubt be a long time before imperialism's aggressive forces lay down their weapons," said General Secretary of the CPSU Central Committee L. I. Brezhnev at a ceremony awarding him the international Lenin Prize for strengthening peace between nations. "And there are still adventurists capable of igniting a new military conflagration for their own egotistical interests. We therefore consider it our sacred duty to conduct a policy making it impossible for any unexpected event to catch us unprepared."[1]

Influenced by a number of sociopolitical and historical circumstances, every war has been different from all others. War, said V. I. Lenin, "is a diverse and complex thing."[2] The interwoven pattern of numerous political, economic, military, geographic, and other factors has brought about an extremely great variety of ways and methods of preparing for and entering into war. This problem became especially complex in the world wars, which drew in dozens of nations in various parts of the globe and affected the vital interests of their peoples.

History has shown us that when nations enter into war, the process is not an act of the moment. It extends over a definite period and is characterized by features that distinguish it from events later in the war. Along with the start of military operations, a whole system of political, ideological, and economic measures affecting a nation's transition from a state of peace to a state of war is carried out during this period. It is thus with good reason that when nations

*[*CPSU—Kommunisticheskaya partiya Sovetskogo Soyuza* 'Communist Party of the Soviet Union'—U.S. Ed.]

enter into war, the process is designated as a special area of research in military history and theory. It has been referred to in different ways in various countries: "the first period of war," "the first phase of war," "the entering period of war," "the preparatory operation," "the initial phase of war," "the initial period of war," and so forth.

The problem of entering into war and conducting the first operations has long been of interest to politicians and military officials, theorists, and historians. The issue of the initial period of war in military history and theory has been raised more than once by the Soviet military press. Many aspects of this complex situation have been discussed in a number of books and articles on the history of World War II and the Great Patriotic War. Even today, however, this important area of historical experience requires additional in-depth and thorough theoretical investigation. "Historians," said Minister of Defense Marshal of the Soviet Union A. A. Grechko, "still have a great deal to do to provide an exhaustive scientific explanation of the large and complex group of problems connected with the start of the last war. . . . There is a great deal to think about: history has a great many lessons with application for modern times."[3]

In preparing for World War II, political and military leaders in the imperialist nations persistently sought "formulas" for victory over their enemies. They worked out various doctrines, plans, and strategic concepts. Preparations to conduct war against the Soviet Union to eliminate the socialist system and restore capitalism in the USSR occupied a special place in the imperialists' plans. Reactionary circles in England, France, and the U.S. exerted every effort to direct the aspirations of the aggressive nations (Germany and Japan) against the Soviet Union. The reactionary circles planned to satisfy the predatory appetites of Germany and Japan at the expense of the Soviet Union, while at the same time weakening Germany and Japan as much as possible and retaining their own colonial possessions. In turn, the rulers of fascist Germany and militarist Japan, while pursuing their goal of destroying the Soviet Union, intended to achieve it after greatly increasing their military and economic potential and improving their strategic position by seizing neighboring nations and weakening the political, economic, and military might of the U.S., England, and France. This situation gave rise to an arms race in both imperialist coalitions.

The two decades preceding the war saw a great increase in the quantity and quality of new military equipment and weapons. This brought about a considerable expansion of the combat capabilities of armed forces and increased their firepower, maneuverability, and capability to make massed attacks to a great depth. The composition of the large and well-equipped armed forces in peacetime, the possibility of rapidly bringing them to combat readiness, and the refinement of mobilization systems made it possible to quickly increase the military might of nations and to react flexibly to changes in the political situation.

Realistic conditions were created for altering the methods of entering into war and there arose the possibility, given a favorable situation, of carrying out major operations with decisive goals at the start of a war. The major capitalist nations, especially Germany and Japan, began to develop various theories and strategic concepts calling for maximum activation of military operations from the start of a war. These were reflected in the military doctrines of these nations and had a decisive influence on the development of operational-strategic plans for conducting war.

The military doctrines and strategic concepts of nations in the fascist bloc (Germany, Japan, and Italy) were of a clearly defined, aggressive character. The military and economic potential of these nations fell considerably short of the overall potential of their likely enemies. The political and military leaders of these nations attempted to compensate for the discrepancy between the far-reaching military and political goals of war and the limited military and economic potentials of their nations by conducting fast-moving, blitzkrieg wars. This led to an extremely venturesome theory and practice of conducting war. The purpose of military theory was reduced to a search for the "secret of victory" and to the development of "special" methods of conducting war that would make it possible to destroy an enemy with potentially superior forces. Paramount importance was attached to timely preparation of a country and its armed forces to engage in war at a date set in advance and to surprise in the attack. Great importance was also attached to careful preparation for conducting initial operations, which were expected to determine the outcome of a war or, at least, to determine it to a certain degree.

Fascist Germany's plans of conquest were based on the notorious doctrine of all-out war and the blitzkrieg strategy. These in turn were based on the political and ideological principles of fascism with its program of expanding German lebensraum by enslaving neighboring nations, followed by conquest of the Soviet Union and the subsequent achievement of world domination.

Fascist Germany's leaders felt that the war for world domination would be a prolonged one, during which they planned to destroy their enemies in succession, one by one, in blitzkrieg campaigns carried out at specific intervals. The systematic defeat of their enemies and acquisition of their territories were to ensure a gradual buildup of their own military and economic strength. Political isolation and internal disintegration of the next victim of aggression were considered to be the most important conditions for the success of the blitzkrieg against individual nations.

The initial (first) operations were considered decisive in achieving the goals of war. During these operations the intention was to defeat the main groupings of ground, air, and naval forces and to disrupt or thwart the mobilization and strategic deployment of enemy armed forces, thus ensuring the favorable subsequent course and outcome of the war. A special role was assigned to the first

surprise massed attack. The destructive force of that attack was to weaken an enemy's entire defense system and to disorganize its government and military control during the first hours and days of war. It was planned to begin the invasion without declaring war. The main measures to mobilize and deploy the armed forces were to be carried out before war began so that the attack would be powerful and unexpected. Aviation and tank forces were to be the main force in making the first attack and conducting initial operations.

Like fascist Germany, Japan based its main hopes in the war against its imperialist rivals on the surprise of attack and the enemy's lack of preparedness to repel aggression. To ensure that the first attacks would be powerful and unexpected, Japanese military theory, like German military theory, called for the main mobilization measures and strategic deployment of the armed forces to be carried out before war began. This was expressed by the Japanese military command in its specific operational-strategic plans for conducting war in the Pacific. The navy was assigned the leading role in the war against England, the U.S., and Holland. Its operations were to achieve sea supremacy at the start of the war and, together with the land forces, the successful conduct of large assault operations. The Japanese command assigned the main role in the accomplishment of these missions to powerful carrier strike forces, land-based aviation, and large groups of surface ships.

The military doctrines and strategic concepts of England, France, and their allies differed considerably from the military doctrines and strategies of the fascist bloc nations, especially in their methods of entering into war and conducting the first operations. Politically, however, they were also imperialist and expansionist. While possessing tremendous military and economic potential, which could have been put to full use throughout the war, these nations preferred a strategy of wearing down the enemy and intended to make their greatest effort not at the war's start, but at its end, waiting for the arrival of the most favorable moment to apply the decisive military effort.

These views resulted primarily from the anti-Soviet character of the policy pursued by ruling circles in the western nations, which were attempting to direct fascist aggression against the Soviet Union to weaken both parties in the struggle and then to force their own will on the world. This was the main reason for the wait-and-see policy of the Anglo-French bloc, which developed into a strategy of defense.

The orientation toward a defensive strategy at the war's start was most clearly manifested in France. The French art of war seemed to be paralyzed at the World War I level and did not take into proper account advances in military affairs. Criticizing this set of views, General de Gaulle wrote, "Concepts current even before the end of World War I prevailed in the army

"The strategy that we planned to pursue in a future war was based on the concept of static warfare. This strategy also determined the organization of the forces, their training and armament, and the entire military doctrine as a whole."[4] With slight changes these concepts became the basis of plans with which France entered World War II.

Following their traditional policy of using other people to do their fighting, England's ruling circles planned to place the main burden of the land war on their partners: France, Poland, and other nations. They were to tie up and exhaust the human and material resources of Germany and its allies in a prolonged war, permitting England to achieve its military and political goals at minimum cost.

The same policy and strategy were even more characteristic of the U.S. That nation's ruling circles planned not to interfere in the war between the rival European nations for a definite period. These circles planned to enter the war in its final stage as a "third power" and, relying on their economic and military strength, take advantage of the fruits of victory by dictating the conditions for peace to both the victorious and the defeated parties.

It is apparent from the above that the western powers did not attempt to launch active combat operations against the fascist bloc at the start of the war. They planned to limit their efforts to converting the war to static forms of warfare in the land theaters of operations and, by taking advantage of their superior naval forces, to organizing a blockade to deprive the enemy of foreign sources of materials for waging war. Despite certain specific features, the strategic views on the initial period of war held by military and political leaders in England, France, and the U.S. were imbued with the idea of defense, the goal of which was to oppose blitzkrieg warfare with a prolonged war calculated to exhaust the enemy and to gain time to fully develop one's own military and economic potential. On the other hand, ruling circles in the western imperialist nations assumed that they would still be able to avert fascist Germany's aggression from themselves and direct it against the USSR.

Thus, while the opposing coalitions of imperialist nations shared a common final goal of destroying or seriously weakening the USSR, they also had their own special goals, which they proposed to achieve at each other's expense. To a considerable extent this also explained the difference in views on methods of entering the war and on the role and type of initial operations.

World War II between the two imperialist blocs began on 1 September 1939 with fascist Germany's attack on Poland. Various nations were subsequently drawn into the war one by one, and the war gradually extended to more and more regions of the globe.

The nations entered World War II in succession. The war first broke out in Europe between fascist Germany and the Anglo–French bloc, which included Poland as its ally. Fascist German aggression then spread to a number of Balkan nations (Greece, Yugoslavia), ending in their occupation. After enslaving almost all Europe, Hitlerite Germany and its satellites attacked the Soviet Union. The Great Patriotic War began. It was to form most of World War II. Several months after the countries in the Hitlerite coalition attacked the USSR, militarist Japan attacked the U.S. and its allies in the Pacific. With the entry of the Soviet Union and the U.S. into the war, it became a true world war, embracing all continents.

As a rule, the wars on the European continent and in Asia, which were integral parts of World War II, had their own initial periods with their own specific features. At the same time, although the various nations entered the war in extremely diverse manners, and while the operations of their armed forces in the initial period of war and the content of their internal and foreign policy measures for their entry into war differed greatly, their methods of entering the war all had common features.

The most important common feature was that, as had not been so in previous wars, combat operations assumed a tremendous scale from the first minutes of the war and were conducted to achieve decisive goals, using all of the forces that the belligerents had managed to deploy by the war's start. The side taking the initiative in unleashing the war entered it with fully mobilized armed forces deployed in advantageous offensive groupings. As a rule, the side subjected to aggression lagged behind in its strategic deployment and, yielding the strategic initiative to the enemy, began the war with defensive operations by covering forces. Mobilization and deployment of the main forces were completed during the initial operations.

Simultaneously with the development of military operations, in the initial period the belligerents carried out a whole series of urgent political, economic, and military measures to mobilize their internal reserves for war and made efforts to strengthen their foreign political positions.

These specific features of the initial period were most pronounced in the wars between large nations or coalitions of nations with vast territories and considerable military and economic potential. Such wars include the war in Europe in 1939–1940; the Soviet Union's Great Patriotic War against fascist Germany and its European allies; and the war unleashed by Japan against the U.S. and other nations in the Pacific and Southeast Asia.

The main opponents in the European war were fascist Germany on one side and France and England on the other. A specific feature of the outbreak of this war was that it began with an attack by fascist Germany not against its main enemies, but against their weak ally—Poland. The governments of France and England responded to this attack with a declaration of war on Germany.

The initial period of the war in Europe consisted mainly of the German–Polish war and the military, political, and economic measures carried out by the belligerents. The initial period was characterized by features and tendencies not observed in the initial period of World War I.

While in World War I the mobilization and strategic deployment of the armed forces in all nations took place on the whole after war had been declared, and combat operations were conducted by comparatively small forces and with limited goals until then, in World War II fascist Germany finished its preparations for the decisive engagements before the war began and carried out its attack against Poland with the main forces of its army. These had been mobilized and deployed along the Polish borders ahead of time in a grouping advantageous for the offensive. The invasion itself was carried out suddenly, without a declaration of war. All of this was made easier by a flexible system of military and economic mobilization, a gradual and concealed deployment of forces along the Polish borders, and a careful concealment of preparations.

The war against Poland was planned by the fascist German command as a single strategic offensive operation designed to destroy the Polish army's main forces in a brief period. The aviation and tank forces had the largest role in achieving this goal. Massed attacks by fascist German aviation against airfields, railroad terminals, and troop concentration sites ensured the rapid achievement of air supremacy, thwarted the mobilization and deployment of forces, and disorganized control over the nation and the armed forces. The use of large groups of tanks and the fascist German army's superior mobility and maneuverability made possible the rapid breakthrough of the Polish army's defenses, the destruction of the front, and the encirclement and annihilation of isolated groupings. The situation of the Polish forces was also greatly complicated because the army had not been fully mobilized by the start of the war and its strategic deployment had not been completed.

Because of all this, the strategic defense of the Polish armed forces rapidly collapsed, and, after achieving its immediate strategic goals, the Hitlerite command was able to begin regrouping its armed forces along Germany's western borders, where a decisive encounter with its main Western European enemies was imminent.

While the Polish army was being defeated by the Hitlerite hordes, its western allies, who had formally declared war against Germany, did not assist Poland as they had promised.

Pursuing their own imperialist goals, the governments of England and France continued their policy of maneuver during this period, applying tremendous effort to avoid a decisive confrontation with Germany and to direct fascist aggression against the USSR at the price of Poland's betrayal. At the same time, these countries were applying new energy in their foreign policy toward neutral

nations, attempting to establish closer contacts with the U.S. and to win Norway, Sweden, Denmark, Belgium, and Holland, as well as certain Balkan nations (Greece, Turkey, and Yugoslavia), over to their side.

During this period there were no active military operations on the Western Front.

After completing most of its mobilization, France deployed its armed forces along its borders at the start of September 1939. One grouping of its forces occupied the Maginot Line, while another was concentrated on the French–Belgian border, ready to move to a line of deployment in Belgium and Holland. England had begun reorganizing its industry to meet its war needs and was conducting combat operations at sea, carrying out mobilization, assembling new formations, and moving expeditionary forces to the continent.

Thus, the new developments noted above in the initial period of the war in Europe took place mainly in the operations of fascist Germany. During this period France and England were taking about the same steps as in World War I in preparing for decisive operations against the main enemy: mobilization, deployment of forces, the creation of strategic groupings, and so forth.

Taking advantage of the inactivity of England and France, by April 1940 the fascist German leadership had carefully prepared for the war's decisive campaign against the Anglo–French coalition without any sort of interference. By then the ground army had been increased to 157 divisions. By 10 May, 136 divisions were concentrated on Germany's western borders. Hitler's command had created three strategic groupings from these forces: the first deployed against Denmark and Norway, the second against Belgium and Holland, and the third (the main grouping) against France to strike across the Ardennes at Abbeville toward the coast of the English Channel.

The military operations that began in the spring of 1940 in the Western European theater had all of the features of the initial period of war, since Denmark, Norway, Holland, Belgium, and Luxembourg, which were attacked by Hitler's forces, had remained outside the war until then. Although they had been at war, France and England clashed with the main forces of the fascist German army for the first time and carried out their first strategic operation since the start of World War II.

A characteristic feature of the initial operations in Western Europe was that fascist Germany first made surprise attacks against Denmark and Norway, followed by a decisive attack against France through Luxembourg, Belgium, and Holland. Since they had maintained a policy of neutrality during the "phony war," the Belgian and Dutch governments had not managed to complete the strategic deployment of their armed forces. They rapidly surrendered when the first attacks were carried out against them, without exhausting all of the

possibilities for effective resistance. The surrender of the Belgian and Dutch armies contributed to the rapid defeat of the main Anglo-French forces in Belgium, Holland, and the northern regions of France. This permitted the fascist German army to achieve a drastic change in the balance of forces (especially in tanks and aviation) and to occupy an advantageous strategic position for the final attack against France. The defeat demoralized the French command, destroyed the army's will to resist, and increased the defeatist mood of the nation's political leadership. All of this led to France's total surrender in a short time.

Even more than in Poland, the massed use of large aviation and tank forces played a decisive role in the success achieved by fascist German forces on the battlefields of Western Europe. The employment of powerful groupings of mobile forces with continuous air support in the first echelons resulted in highly dynamic operations with great mobility and greatly increased rates of development. Attacks by such groupings totally destroyed the static defense of the Anglo-French forces, which lacked adequate strategic reserves capable of warding off the enemy's battering blows.

Japan prepared for and unleashed the war in the Pacific at a time when the nations of Western Europe had suffered a serious defeat in the war with fascist Germany, and the Soviet Union was single-handedly conducting a heroic struggle against the combined forces of Hitler's Reich and its European allies.

Like the German fascists, the Japanese militarists intended to accomplish their plans to seize the rich raw material resources of the Philippines, Malaya, Indonesia, Thailand, and Burma by carrying out a number of simultaneous and successive rapid operations, regarding them as the first phase or the initial period of the war.[5]

By the start of December 1941 Japan was totally prepared to engage in a major war, which it began on dates established in advance. Although the U.S. had information on Japan's preparations to invade its Pacific possessions, it still hoped that Japan would turn its aggression toward the USSR. The U.S. did not take proper measures to strengthen its positions in the Pacific and was taken by surprise in the first attacks made by the Japanese armed forces.

The initial period of the war in the Pacific theater, which lasted from December 1941 through April 1942, consisted mainly of a general strategic offensive by the Japanese armed forces over the vast expanses of the Pacific and Southeast Asia, and the conduct of a strategic defense by the U.S. and its allies. The Japanese offensive was carried out with the specific features of the ocean theater and the distribution of enemy forces taken into account, and was conducted by several groupings operating simultaneously along separate strategic axes until the assigned missions were fully accomplished.

Military operations in the Pacific began with a surprise attack by Japanese carrier-based aircraft against the main forces of the U.S. Pacific Fleet at Pearl Harbor, with simultaneous air attacks against airfields in the Philippines and the landing of troops in Malaya. The Japanese offensive assumed tremendous scope from the first days of the war and was carried out simultaneously on land, at sea, and in the air. After the first attacks by the Japanese navy and air force, most of the U.S. Pacific Fleet at the main naval base at Pearl Harbor in the Hawaiian Islands was destroyed or rendered inoperable, the American air force in the Philippines was knocked out, and the British navy and air force in Malaya suffered great losses. The success of these attacks ensured Japanese air and sea supremacy, which in turn created favorable conditions for landing large amphibious assault forces. Japanese air and sea supremacy was strengthened when assault forces seized enemy naval bases and airfields, to which additional Japanese forces were rapidly transferred. Aviation, primarily carrier-based, was decisive in the struggle to rule the seas. The extensive scope of landing operations, carried out with close cooperation between all branches of the armed forces, and rapid maneuver at sea and in the air ensured great depth and high rates of advance for the Japanese forces.

The swift advance of the Japanese, who held the initiative totally, thwarted all attempts by the allies to organize resistance at important strategic positions. The Anglo-American command was not able to withdraw its forces from under attack and organize a defense. Japanese air and sea supremacy prevented the allied command from transferring its reserves to the threatened areas in time. The defensive operations of the demoralized allied forces were concentrated in centers of resistance and, as a rule, ended in hasty retreat or surrender. After suffering tremendous losses and losing vast territories, the allies were forced to quickly create a new strategic defensive line along the immediate approaches to India, Australia, the Hawaiian Islands, and Alaska.

During a continuous 5-month offensive the Japanese armed forces achieved all the goals assigned them for the initial period of the war. After occupying the Philippines, Malaya, the Dutch East Indies, Thailand, Burma, and other nations, they controlled a huge territory with a population of more than 150 million and rich reserves of strategic raw materials. The seizure of these territories contributed greatly to Japan's conduct of a prolonged war in the Pacific. But no matter how great Japan's successes during the initial period, these successes could not guarantee the outcome of the war in Japan's favor, since the vital centers of the nations opposing Japan had not been affected and their military and economic potential had not been destroyed. Nevertheless, the American armed forces required approximately 3 years of intense military operations to overcome, together with their allies, the consequences of the initial operations and regain the lost territories.

Thus, in the wars between the capitalist nations, the aggressor took advantage of surprise attacks and the power of armed forces deployed in advance to

completely achieve primary and sometimes even ultimate goals during the initial period. The capitalist nations that found themselves the victims of aggression were not in a position to prevent the enemy from accomplishing its strategic plans. Suffering great losses, these nations underwent defeat (Poland), surrendered (France, Belgium, Holland, and others), or, as happened in the Pacific, lost huge territories and the ability to regain the strategic initiative for a long period.

The new developments observed in the character and content of the initial periods of the wars between the capitalist nations were even more clearly manifested in the Soviet Union's Great Patriotic War against the combined forces of the fascist bloc of nations under the aegis of Hitlerite Germany.

The Great Patriotic War began in a situation extremely unfavorable for the Soviet Union. After defeating its enemies in Western Europe and completing the mobilization of its armed forces, fascist Germany found it possible, without fearing for its European rear, to concentrate and deploy a tremendous mass of troops and combat equipment along the Soviet borders in a grouping favorable for the offensive. The absence of a second front in Europe permitted the fascist German command to use more than 70 percent of all the infantry divisions at its disposal, 90 percent of its tank and motorized divisions, and more than 60 percent of its combat aviation for its attack against the USSR.[6]

Preparing the nation to repel imperialist aggression during the prewar years, the Communist Party, the Soviet government, and all of our people did a tremendous amount of work to create the material base for the nation's defense, to develop a war industry, and to stockpile all types of strategic materials. The threat of an imperialist attack against the Soviet nation, which became especially acute at the start of World War II, forced the Soviet government to take new measures to prepare the nation for defense, and, specifically, to greatly increase the size of the Soviet Armed Forces. Their strength grew by a factor of 2.8 from 1939 to 1941. These party and government measures were of tremendous importance for increasing the nation's defense capability and raising the general level of the armed forces' mobilizational and operational readiness to repel fascist aggression.

As fascist Germany prepared for its planned attack against the USSR, the Soviet Union consequently introduced important measures during the prewar period to prepare for decisive engagements. However, while fascist Germany had already placed its economy on a war footing and had totally mobilized its armed forces before the war began, the Soviet Union had only partially completed this work. On the eve of the war the Soviet economy was still operating entirely according to peacetime plans and, despite intensive development of its war industry, had not been able to supply its rapidly growing armed forces with the necessary quantity of combat equipment and weapons, especially the latest types.

As a result, many difficulties were encountered in the organizational development of the Armed Forces, in equipping them, and in improving their combat readiness. When the war began, fascist Germany had temporary superiority in new weapons.

Other factors were also behind the reduced combat readiness of the Soviet Armed Forces to repel fascist aggression. These had to do primarily with limitations set by the Soviet government on concentrating and deploying forces of the western military districts along the border. These limitations resulted from the Soviet government's desire to avoid a military confrontation with fascist Germany, or at least not to provide it with an excuse to unleash a war against the Soviet Union too early; the government thus gained time to complete the reorganization and rearmament of the Soviet Army.

The directive ordering that the forces of the border military districts be made combat ready and moved up to the border was not issued until the early hours of 22 June 1941, a few hours before the enemy's invasion of our nation. This made it possible for the enemy to achieve its strategic deployment before the Soviet Armed Forces, and it provided the enemy with a number of other extremely important advantages at the start of the war.

Fascist Germany and the Soviet Union thus entered the war in unequal circumstances, as a result of which our nation and Armed Forces found themselves in a difficult situation at the start of military operations. The causes of this disparity were thoroughly revealed by the CPSU Central Committee. "The Hitlerites enjoyed temporary advantages: militarization of the economy and all aspects of life in Germany; lengthy preparations for a war of aggression, and experience gained from military operations in the west; and superiority in armament and troop strength, with German forces already concentrated near the border. They had at their disposal the economic and military resources of almost all of Western Europe. Hitlerite Germany had seized in the European nations an entire arsenal of weapons, tremendous stocks of metals and strategic raw materials, and metallurgical and military plants. The Soviet Union was forced to enter into single combat with a colossal military machine.

"Errors made in estimating the possible time for Hitlerite Germany's attack against us, and resulting errors in preparing to repel the first attacks, also played a role."[7]

According to Directive No. 21 (the Barbarossa plan) the fascist German command defined the immediate goal of the first operations in the Baltic region, Belorussia, and the western Ukraine as that of breaking up the forces of Soviet border districts into isolated sections with attacks by tank groups and field armies supported by aviation on the Dvina, Minsk–Smolensk, and Kiev axes and destroying them west of the Western Dvina and Dnepr, thus clearing the way for a later unhindered advance to Leningrad, Moscow, and the Don Basin.[8]

Taking the existing situation into account, the Soviet command attempted from the start of the war to halt the advance of enemy strike forces, to push them back to their initial positions, and, given favorable conditions, to transfer military operations to enemy territory. The resoluteness of these goals and the uncompromising, class nature of the war gave it tremendous scope and resulted in fierce, highly dynamic military operations from the first days.

The fascist German army began its invasion of our nation with surprise strikes by forces fully prepared for the attack. During the first hours of the war enemy aviation carried out massed attacks against airfields and forces in the border area (from the Western Dvina to the Dnepr). Many of our nation's cities were bombed at this time: Kiev, Minsk, Smolensk, Sevastopol, and others. The surprise attack forced Soviet troops to engage in combat at a great disadvantage. Many units and formations were caught unprepared. They were forced to enter into combat on the march and in sections. Despite these extremely difficult circumstances, our forces offered heroic resistance to the enemy from the first hours of the war. Combat operations spread over a vast front from the Baltic Sea to the Carpathians (1,500 km). The front of the enemy's strategic offensive was extended in the following days: Germany's satellite forces went over to the offensive. By mid-July military operations extended over a front of 3,000 km, 400 to 600 km deep along the main axes. New forces were drawn into the war with each passing day. The fascist German command committed 117 divisions to action on the first day of the war. Ten days later, following the introduction of formations from the second echelons and satellite forces into battle, the number of enemy divisions operating in the first line had increased to 171.[9] Only covering armies took part in the border engagements on the Soviet side. In the following days the forces of all the western border military districts, 170 divisions, participated in the initial operations, and strategic reserves brought up from the nation's interior joined into battle at the start of July. A total of around 400 divisions, thousands of tanks and aircraft, tens of thousands of guns and mortars, and a large quantity of other types of combat equipment were used in battle on both sides during the first weeks of the war.

Initial operations on the Soviet-German Front saw a high level of activity and maneuver and were distinguished by great diversity of forms and methods. After seizing the strategic initiative, the enemy rapidly developed the offensive, extensively employing divisive attacks to break up the strategic front, and carried out deep and close envelopments that sometimes resulted in the complete encirclement of large groups of Soviet forces. The Soviet Armed Forces countered similar enemy operations with an active strategic defense of maneuver, pursuing the goal of destroying the enemy's offensive capabilities and exhausting and weakening its strike groups. While conducting fierce defensive engagements, Soviet forces combined a determined defense of occupied positions with withdrawal to intermediate or rear positions when necessary. They battled in encirclement and fought their way out of encirclement. In all situations they conducted an active defense. Numerous counterattacks by armies and fronts were

an inseparable part of Soviet defensive operations. As a rule, large tank formations took part in these counterattacks.

Strategic reserves played a tremendous role in restoring and stabilizing the strategic defensive front, which had been broken up by the enemy on the main axes. General Headquarters transferred 35 divisions to the Western Front between 27 June and 10 July to restore defenses on the central axis that were breached by the enemy during the first days of the war.[10] Encountering determined and constantly increasing resistance by our forces along the entire Soviet-German Front, the enemy was forced to spread the efforts of its strike groups. The rates of advance, which had reached 30 km a day during the first days of the war, dropped to 6 or 7 km a day by mid-July. A considerable part of the front had stabilized by that time. Soviet forces had temporarily secured themselves on a line between Pyarnu and Tartu. Fascist German forces were halted for approximately a month on the Luga River. Fierce engagements developed on the Smolensk axis, as a result of which Army Group Center went over to the defensive at the end of July for a long period. The situation stabilized on the approaches to Kiev and on the Dnepr to the south of the Ukrainian capital. Operations in the initial period of the war concluded at these positions. A new stage of the summer-fall campaign of 1941 began with the introduction of large strategic reserves of the General Headquarters of the Soviet Supreme High Command; these formed the second strategic echelon of the Soviet Armed Forces.

The plan of Hitler's command in the border engagements to destroy the main Soviet forces to the south of the Dvina and Dnepr and to open the way for an unimpeded advance into our nation's interior was thwarted by the active defense of the first strategic echelon and by the commitment of strategic reserves to battle. After repelling the first enemy onslaught, the Soviet Army, after deploying its main forces, was prepared for a continuation of active defensive operations. The first major fracture had occurred in the vaunted Barbarossa plan, which called for defeating Soviet Russia with a "rapid-moving" military operation. **This was the main military-political result of the initial period of the Great Patriotic War.**

The Soviet Armed Forces inflicted considerable losses on the enemy during the intense defensive engagements in the border zone. Many of Hitler's generals admitted that these losses could not be compared with those suffered in Western Europe. As of 13 July, according to General Halder, chief of the German army general staff, these losses amounted to around 100,000 men killed, wounded, or unaccounted for.[11] The enemy suffered even greater losses of combat equipment. According to General Halder, the tank forces lost around 50 percent of their effective strength and the air force around 25 percent during the first 3 weeks of the war. The fascist German army had never before suffered such great losses in such a brief period.

The Soviet Armed Forces paid the price in large losses of men, military equipment, and territory to achieve these important military, political, and strategic results in the initial period of the war. The threat of continued enemy advance into our nation's interior had still not been lifted.

The tremendous danger facing our nation after fascist Germany's treacherous attack and the unfavorable development of events on the front made necessary extraordinary measures to mobilize all of the nation's human and material resources. The Communist Party assumed the leadership of the national struggle against the fascist German invaders from the first day of the war. The party rapidly carried out a number of extraordinary political, military, and economic measures to put the nation on a war footing, and it mobilized the nation's efforts to repel the mortal enemy.

Relying on the capabilities of the socialist economy and the advantages of the Soviet social and state structure, the AUCP(b)* Central Committee drew up a program to achieve victory over the fascist German invaders. One of the first documents defining the just, emancipatory goals of the Great Patriotic War and revealing the conditions necessary for the enemy's defeat was a directive issued on 29 June 1941 by the USSR SNK† and the AUCP(b) Central Committee to party and soviet organizations in the regions next to the front. Along with a program of objectives defining the ultimate goals of the Soviet people in the Great Patriotic War, this historic document described the immediate internal political, economic, and military tasks for the total mobilization of the nation's forces to repel fascist aggression. The party also promulgated its foreign policy in this document, pointing out that the ultimate goal of the Great Patriotic War of the Soviet people was not only the liberation of the Soviet Union from the fascist German invaders but also the provision of assistance to European nations enslaved by fascism in restoring their national freedom and independence.

Mobilization of citizens eligible for military service in the 14 military districts was one of the first practical steps taken by the Communist Party and Soviet government at the start of the war. Martial law was declared in the nation's western regions. All of the government functions in organizing defense, maintaining public order, and ensuring national security were turned over to the military councils of the fronts, armies, and military districts, and to the command elements of large military units where no military councils existed. Local government authorities, establishments, and enterprises were required to cooperate fully with the military command in organizing defense. A partisan movement was developed in the enemy's rear, and partisan groups were organized for diversionary and reconnaissance work.

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*[*AUCP(b)—Vsesoyuznaya Kommunisticheskaya partiya (bol'shevikov)* 'All-Union Communist Party (of Bolsheviks)'—U.S. Ed.]

†[*SNK—Sovet Narodnykh Komissarov* 'Council of People's Commissars'—U.S. Ed.]

Government and military control bodies were reorganized and new military leadership organs were created. During the war years the AUCP(b) Central Committee, the Presidium of the USSR Supreme Soviet, and the USSR SNK carried out all of the work in strengthening the nation's defense and directing military operations through the State Defense Committee and the Supreme High Command General Headquarters, which were extraordinary organs created at the start of the war.

Soviet industry, agriculture, transport, finance, and the urban and rural work forces were mobilized during the first days of the war. The nation's food reserves were mobilized. Industrial goods and food supplies for the population were rationed. The people, factories, and material goods situated near the front were evacuated to the nation's interior.

Our party carried out extremely important foreign policy measures at the start of the war. A Soviet-British agreement on joint operations in the war against Germany was signed in Moscow on 12 July 1941 at the proposal of the Soviet government. Soviet-American talks on deliveries of strategic raw materials and weapons to the USSR took place at the end of July. During that same period the Soviet government renewed diplomatic relations with the governments of Czechoslovakia and Poland in London and concluded agreements with them on mutual commitments in the war against Germany.

The program for the antifascist war of liberation advanced by the Soviet Union inspired freedom-loving people to struggle against fascism. Pressured by the broad popular masses, the ruling circles of western nations subjected to Hitler's aggression were forced to come together with the Soviet Union in the war against fascist Germany. These were the first steps in forming an anti-Hitler coalition.

Thus, in addition to launching extensive military operations, during the first weeks of the war the Soviet Union was forced to carry out a broad array of extraordinary national measures that brought fundamental changes in the character and content of the nation's political, ideological, and economic life. All of these events and immediate measures, which centered around the military operations at the front between 22 June and mid-July 1941, constituted the main activities of the initial period of the Great Patriotic War.

The entry of various nations into World War II showed that in Western Europe, in the Pacific, and on the Soviet-German Front there were fundamentally new features in the initial period of this war. In character and content, this period differed sharply from the initial periods of past wars. A widespread tendency developed to shift the preparatory measures for decisive engagements by the main forces from the initial period of war to the prewar period and to arrange for these engagements to be fought at the start of the war. Typical of a number of nations was their entry into armed conflict with a declaration of war and their

use of an entire system of concealment measures to ensure the secrecy of mobilizing, concentrating, and deploying their armed forces.

In the wars between capitalist nations, as pointed out above, the aggressors as a rule achieved their primary goals and sometimes their ultimate goals in the first operations. This was not so in the initial period of the Soviet Union's Great Patriotic War. Although the aggressor did achieve important operational-strategic results during this period, the advantages gained by the enemy from its surprise attack did not have the paralyzing effects on the Soviet-German Front that were achieved on the other fronts of World War II. The Hitlerite command was not able to achieve the immediate goals of the Barbarossa plan. The Soviet Army's main forces were not demoralized or destroyed in the initial operations, and the enemy was not given the possibility to advance unhindered to the nation's most important political and economic centers. This was the result of the heroic and determined resistance offered by Soviet forces, the unprecedented courage and selflessness of the Soviet people, and the great guiding and organizing force of the Communist Party.

The authors' collective of this book saw its main task—based on the investigation and summary of data on the entry of the major capitalist nations and the Soviet Union into World War II—in examining the more complex problems from the initial period of armed confrontations and in disclosing general trends in the preparation and conduct of initial operations, trends which were characteristic of World War II and have not lost their importance today.

Notes

1. *Pravda*, 12 July 1971.
2. V. I. Lenin, *Polnoye sobraniye sochineniy* [Complete Collected Works], XLIX, 369. [Hereafter cited as Lenin—U.S. Ed.]
3. *Voyenno-istoricheskiy zhurnal* [Journal of Military History], 1966, No. 6, pp. 4, 6. [Hereafter cited as *Journal of Military History*—U.S. Ed.]
4. Charles de Gaulle, *Voyennyye memuary* [War Memoirs] (Moscow: Izdatel'stvo inostrannoy literatury, 1957), I, 34. [Hereafter cited as de Gaulle—U.S. Ed.]
5. See S. Hayashi, *Yaponskaya armiya v voyennykh deystviyakh na Tikhom okeane* [The Japanese Army in Military Operations in the Pacific Ocean] (Moscow: Voyenizdat, 1964), pp. 51-53. [Hereafter cited as Hayashi, *The Japanese Army in the Pacific*—U.S. Ed.]
6. See *Vtoraya mirovaya voyna 1939-1945 gg. Voyenno-istoricheskiy ocherk* [World War II 1939-1945: A Military History Outline] (Moscow: Voyenizdat, 1958), pp. 136-137. [Hereafter cited as *World War II Outline*—U.S. Ed.]; *Istoriya Velikoy Otechestvennoy voyny Sovetskogo Soyuza 1941-1945* [The History of the Great Patriotic War of the Soviet Union 1941-1945] (Moscow: Voyenizdat, 1963), II, 9. [Hereafter cited as *Great Patriotic War*—U.S. Ed.]
7. *50 let Velikoy Oktyabr'skoy sotsialisticheskoy revolyutsii. Tezisy TsK KPSS* [The 50th Anniversary of the Great October Socialist Revolution: CPSU Central Committee Theses] (Moscow: Politizdat, 1967), p. 19.
8. See *Porazheniye germanskogo imperializma vo vtoroy mirovoy voyne. Stat'i i dokumenty* [The Defeat of German Imperialism in World War II: Articles and Documents] (Moscow: Vovenizdat, 1960), pp. 200-206.

9. See *World War II Outline*, p. 196.
10. *Istoriya Kommunisticheskoy partii Sovetskogo Soyuza* [The History of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union] (Moscow: Politizdat, 1970), V, Bk. 1, p. 202. [Hereafter cited as *CPSU History*—U.S. Ed.]
11. See *Great Patriotic War*, II, 47.

PART I: THE FORMATION AND DEVELOPMENT OF VIEWS ON THE INITIAL PERIOD OF WAR FROM THE NINETEENTH CENTURY UNTIL THE 1940s

Chapter 1. Entry Into War in the Nineteenth Century and at the Start of the Twentieth Century

An examination of past wars shows that during all historical eras the nations that have tried to achieve political goals by force of arms have closely linked victory in war with the most careful preparations for entry into war and with the concealed mobilization and deployment of their armed forces to defeat the enemy in the first engagements by the advantages of surprise attack. During a deterioration of international relations, nations threatened by the danger of an armed attack took measures to avoid lagging behind their enemies in preparing to enter into war (in carrying out mobilization, deploying armies, and so forth) and to avoid letting themselves be caught unprepared. The desire of the belligerents to preempt their enemies in mobilizing and deploying troops, thus minimizing the time between the decision to start war and the commitment of the main forces to the first engagements, has been apparent as a permanent trend in history. This can be observed not only in wars of the distant past, but also in wars that we have witnessed.

1. Specific Features of Entry Into War After the Rise and Development of Mass Armies (Late Eighteenth to Late Nineteenth Centuries)

The rise and development of mass armies, the start of which goes back to French bourgeois revolution of 1789, gave rise to complex sociopolitical, economic, and purely military problems in supporting such armies in peacetime, in preparing them to enter into war, and, finally, in employing them during war.

The deployment of mass armies recruited under universal military conscription was a great sociopolitical problem for the ruling classes of the bourgeois and aristocratic-monarchic nations. The weapons that they were forced to issue to the representatives of the exploited classes– precisely those who made up the mass armies—were a source of constant anxiety for those with control over

their own fate. This forced governments to show particular concern to prevent the people from using their weapons against the existing sociopolitical system.

The maintenance and, especially, the combat employment of mass armies presented the bourgeois and aristocratic-monarchic nations with acute economic problems. To divert a large part of an adult population from productive labor and to allocate a considerable part of a national budget, even in peacetime, to support and outfit a mass army imposed a heavy burden on a nation's economy. The ruling classes and their governments tried to solve these problems by increasing the taxation of the population and setting definite limits on the size of their armies in times of peace. But since the nineteenth century was extremely rich in major and minor wars, these measures were often shelved because the support and combat use of mass armies required more and more national expenditures.

Finally, from the moment of declaring war, nations in the first half of the nineteenth century were confronted with difficult military problems, among which, of primary importance, were the mobilization, strategic concentration, and deployment of troops on selected axes. The essence of these problems was ultimately a problem of time. The very act of declaring war required the most rapid possible mobilization, deployment of armies, and movement of forces to the regions of coming military operations. At the same time, in this period any movement of troops and the materiel allocated to them (weapons, provisions, ammunition, and so forth) rested on the muscle power of men and horses. For this reason the pace of the mobilization and concentration of armies in theaters of operations was extremely slow. The gap between the start of mobilization and the first engagements of the main forces was very great. For example, in 1800, in the war with Italy, Napoleon took nearly 4 months to organize, arm, and supply with provisions and ammunition a reserve army and move it from southern France into Italy.

The most rapid rates in executing a march to new theaters of war were achieved by Russian troops under the command of A. V. Suvorov. In the June campaign of 1779 in Italy, Russian troops moved 400 km in 12 days at an average rate of 33 to 34 km a day. For those times that was the maximum speed for moving troops on foot over great distances.

A fundamental change in the speed of mobilization and the rate of moving troops took place in the second half of the nineteenth century with the rapid development of industry, particularly of metallurgy and transport, when railroads were used for the first time for the strategic concentration and deployment of armies. At the start of the Franco-Prussian War of 1870–1871, Prussia, using the railroads, was able to move an army of 400,000 men 550 km in 11 days at a speed of 50 km a day. The Prussians were far ahead of the French army in readying their main forces for the start of military operations and made a powerful attack precisely at a time when the French army had not yet been able

to complete its strategic deployment. This made it possible for the Prussian army to achieve a major success at the start of the war.

Because of the further growth of industry and the railroads, by the end of the 1890s Germany and France were able to transport armies of 500,000 men over great distances in a shorter time than was required in 1870 to move a single corps of 30,000 men.[1] In the late 1890s the development of industry and particularly of transport created real conditions for a sharp reduction in the time between declaring war and starting active operations by the main forces. "Because of the influence of railroads and careful preparations for war," noted the well-known Russian military theorist Leyer, "the preparatory period is now much shorter, wars may break out more suddenly, and the first attacks will be marked by a more decisive character."[2]

In studying the influence of industrial progress on the character and methods of waging war, many military researchers recognized that nations moving toward armed aggression acquired new capabilities to preempt their enemies in mobilizing and deploying their armies and also, especially, in making the first attack at a moment when least expected.

The idea of a preemptive attack was widespread in Germany. German military thought held that Germany, in having a sufficiently modern mobilization system and developed industry, could achieve victory even over a stronger enemy during initial operations or brief campaigns.

Russian military thought held a different view. None of the Russian military theorists was inclined to underestimate the importance of the role of initial engagements in the course and outcome of a war. They clearly considered that preempting an enemy in deploying one's main forces was a decisive guarantee if not of a rapid victory, then, in any event, of the possibility of avoiding a severe defeat at the start of war. At the same time, they noted that with the introduction of the new mobilization system—compulsory military conscription—initial operations, even of an expanded scope and intensity, could not determine the outcome of a war, although they would exert a serious influence on its course. At present, war is confronted with goals that are enormous in scope, said Leyer, and to achieve them the fate of nations and peoples is put at risk. The side defeated in the first engagements still cannot be considered conquered. It has an opportunity to alter the unfavorable situation by additional mobilizations and the commitment of major new forces to battle. When a nation mobilizes all its forces, a war will inevitably assume an extremely fierce and extended character.[3]

The new possibilities created by industrial progress for preemptive operations in preparing and unleashing war gave rise to the fear that an enemy could penetrate an opposing nation's territory more rapidly and deeply than ever before. This danger forced many military theorists to take another look at the problems

of the combat use of covering forces. In the first half of the nineteenth century these forces (usually the cavalry), in comparatively small numbers, were positioned along the borders on threatened axes and carried out passive missions to cover the mobilization and deployment of the main forces. Later, the advisability was recognized of creating large mobile detachments (for example, cavalry formations numbering up to 1,000 men with artillery) that would be able to make diversionary attacks in the enemy rear to disrupt and even thwart the deployment of the enemy army—that is, to carry out active combat missions.

Thus, after the rise and development of mass armies, particularly in the second half of the nineteenth century, and because of the growth of industry, especially the development of the railroads, hostile nations gained genuine possibilities to substantially reduce the time required to mobilize, deploy, and concentrate their armies and, thus, to commit their main forces to action more rapidly than before. As the Franco-Prussian War showed, these new developments accorded precisely with the persistent desire of belligerent nations to preempt an enemy by carrying out such measures in order to achieve strategic successes at the start of military operations.

The possibilities engendered by technical progress of shortening the time required to make preparations inevitably led to a reduction in the time between the declaration of war and its actual start. Looking at wars in the nineteenth century, this period consisted mostly of preparations (mobilization deployment, concentration of troops, and so forth), but even then a tendency could be seen to begin military operations in this interval and to bring the moment of a general meeting of the main forces closer to the start of the war.

2. Methods of Entry Into War From the Experience of the Russo-Japanese War of 1904–05

The Russo-Japanese War of 1904–05 was the first major war of the age of imperialism in which, in the definition of V. I. Lenin, decrepit aristocratic-monarchic Russia and young Japanese imperialism met.

This war is instructive because of the unique strategic deployment of both sides' main forces and of the combat operations from the moment of the war's outbreak until the general engagement at Liaoyang.

The character of the events that developed at the start of the Russo-Japanese War was determined to a great degree by the immediate strategic goals that the belligerents had set for themselves. The plan of the Russian command was quite clearly formulated by the commander in chief of the Manchurian Army, Kuropatkin, in a report to the tsar. "Our most important task at the start of the war," he wrote, "should be the concentration of our forces. To achieve this task, we should not spare any . . . strategic considerations, bearing in mind

that the main point is not to permit the enemy to achieve victory over our scattered forces. Only after sufficiently strengthening and preparing ourselves for the offensive can we go over to it, having provided for success as much as possible."[4]

In Kuropatkin's opinion, the Russian army could begin decisive offensive operations to expel the Japanese from Manchuria and Korea and to land assault forces in Japan not sooner than 6 months after the declaration of mobilization. To gain time and to ensure the concentration and deployment of its ground forces, the Russian command directed the Pacific Squadron to win supremacy in the Yellow Sea at the start of the war and to impede the landing of Japanese assault forces on the coast of the Asian continent.

In planning the war, Japan set active offensive missions for itself. It counted on Russia's clearly insufficient readiness for the war, the relatively small number of Russian forces in the Far East, and the impossibility of rapidly increasing their number because of the low capacity of the Trans-Siberian railroad. To freely transfer forces to the Asian continent and preempt the Russian army in strategic deployment, the Japanese command, like the Russian, resolved to win sea supremacy. With this in mind, the attack on the Russian navy was to come as a surprise, without a declaration of war.

Thus, both sides set for themselves the immediate strategic goal of winning sea supremacy and securing unobstructed deployment of the main forces of their armies in the Manchurian theater of operations.

On the night of 9 January 1904 the Japanese command succeeded in making a surprise attack on the Russian Pacific Squadron, which, ignoring security measures, was anchored in the outer harbor at Port Arthur. Although this attack caused a severe loss to the Russian navy, it still did not produce the results that the Japanese command was counting on. For 2 months the Japanese navy was forced to conduct continuous attacks against the Russian squadron, which securely covered the approaches to the Liaotung Peninsula. Not until 13 April, after the loss of the battleship *Petropavlovsk* with the squadron commander, Admiral Makarov, who was on board, did the Russian ships retreat to Port Arthur and take shelter in the harbor. From this moment the Japanese navy seized complete sea supremacy.

A specific feature of the strategic concentration and deployment of the Japanese army on the continent was that, initially, forces were landed only in Korea, since the approaches to the Kwantung Peninsula were blocked by the Russian navy. Not until May, 3 months after the start of the war, were the Japanese able to begin landing their main forces on the Kwantung coast. Despite the passivity of the Russian command, which in fact did not impede the enemy's landing operations, the concentration of Japanese forces on the continent continued for over 4 months. Their advance to the main Russian positions at

Liaoyang and their deployment before the general engagement took another 6 weeks. Such slowness in the concentration and deployment of the Japanese forces was explained by the complexity of the theater of operations, which was an impassable forested mountain range, as well as by the inability of Japanese reconnaissance to supply its command with reliable information on the enemy and its movements. As a result, the command acted extremely indecisively, constantly fearing surprise flank attacks by the Russian forces. An important factor that diverted the attention of the Japanese command from accomplishing its chief mission of closing quickly with the main forces of the Russian army was the desire to seize Port Arthur. For one reason or another, the Russian army gained these 6 months to prepare for the general engagement, which Kuropatkin was counting on.

How were these 6 months used by the Russian command?

By the start of the war Russia had an army of around 100,000 men in the Far East. These forces were scattered over the enormous expanses of the Maritime, Amur, and Transbaykal areas. In Manchuria itself there were 27 battalions, 22 squadrons, and 44 artillery pieces, and at this time these forces were being reorganized. The two-battalion regiments were being converted into three-battalion ones.[5] It was difficult to concentrate the available forces in a region of coming combat operations because of the limited number of roads and the remoteness of many garrisons from the only railroad (a distance of up to 600 km).

The movement of forces from the central regions of Russia was even more complicated. The capacity of the single-track Trans-Siberian mainline during the first months of the war was three pairs of trains per day. The trains from the European part of Russia to the Far East took 6 weeks. For this reason the supply of forces to Manchuria during the first 6 months of the war did not exceed 20,000 men per month. This also explains why Kuropatkin, in trying to preserve his forces for the general engagement, did not assign active missions to the forward units deployed around Yingkou (the southern detachment of 2? 000 men) and on the Yalu River (the eastern detachment of 20,000 men). All the battles and engagements that took place from the coast to the approaches to Liaoyang he saw as "rearguard" and "feint" maneuvers conducted to gain time.

The 6-month delaying actions of the forward units of the Russian army did, of course, play a role. By mid-August, when the Japanese forces had set out for Liaoyang, and by the start of the first major operations between the main forces of both sides, the Russian command had been able to concentrate around 160,000 men and 592 guns in this area. The Japanese command had 125,000 men and 484 guns.

Thus, the Russo-Japanese War showed that the main content of its initial period was the mobilization, concentration, and deployment of the main forces of the belligerents for entering a general engagement. At the same time, in contrast

to past wars, the initial period of the Russo-Japanese War from the first days included intense combat operations at sea, and then on land. And the war itself was started without a formal declaration by a surprise attack by the Japanese navy against the Russian Pacific Squadron.

The specific features of the theater of operations, the character of the strategic decisions made by both sides, and the methods of achieving set goals were behind the war's rather long initial period. While the Russian command was consciously trying to put off a general engagement, hoping to gain as much time as possible to concentrate and deploy its army, the Japanese command had no such intention. Possessing the strategic initiative, it had an opportunity to defeat the Russian army at the start of the war, but because of its slowness and extreme caution, it was unable to do so.

In starting the war, the governments of Russia and Japan did not expect that an enormous economic effort or the organization of the mass production of military equipment and weapons would be required. The demands of the war exceeded the size of the mobilization reserves on which both belligerents were counting. Russia could not withstand such stress, while Japan handled it only because of economic and military aid from the U.S. and England.

The experience and lessons of the Russo-Japanese War attracted close attention not only in Russia but elsewhere as well. This information was carefully studied and used by general staffs in preparing for the approaching world war.

3. Problems of Entry Into War on the Eve of World War I

In the last decade before the war the problems faced by nations entering into war inevitably evoked great interest among military leaders and theorists. Germany, France, and Russia were particularly concerned with the study of these problems. In these countries, military doctrines were gradually developed that, in one way or another, reflected the established views on the initial period of war.

German military doctrine, filled with the ideas of an aggressive offensive war, rested on the theoretical heritage of Field Marshal Helmuth von Moltke, who had been the chief of the Prussian general staff from 1857 to 1888. At the start of the twentieth century, von Moltke's ideas were accepted and developed by his successor as chief of the general staff, Schlieffen, who, like his predecessor, was a supporter of offensive strategy. But while von Moltke considered it impossible to think of a rapid war in an armed clash among the great European powers, with their enormous, well-equipped armies, Schlieffen adhered to a different view. In his opinion, although Germany was encircled by economically strong nations, it could break out of this ring and emerge the victor in the struggle to win a dominant position in Europe and throughout the world by conducting sequential blitzkrieg wars with each of its enemies.

Schlieffen's views were widely reflected in the works of German military researchers, and ultimately in the war plan itself. These views were expressed most starkly in the work *Modern Warfare* by the German military theorist Friedrich von Bernhardi.

In von Bernhardi's opinion, Germany could achieve victory over potentially stronger enemies only by defeating them consecutively in the shortest time, "like lightning." Proceeding from this main idea, he attached special importance to the first (initial) period of the war. The success or failure of combat operations during this time, in his opinion, had a decisive influence on the entire war.

In his arguments von Bernhardi considered that the major nations of Europe were steadily increasing the size of their armed forces and were trying to keep their best and most dependable forces ready in peacetime for mobilization and strategic deployment should war break out. Even during deployment, von Bernhardi felt, major engagements could occur. To emerge victorious, he concluded, mobilization and deployment had to be conducted rapidly and in an organized manner, always striving to carry out in peacetime the maximum possible preparatory measures.

From his arguments von Bernhardi concluded that after the completion of strategic deployment not a single minute must be lost. The enemy must be attacked and stunned by the force of the initial strike, its plans and calculations confused, thus deciding the outcome of the initial operations in one's favor. If the first armed clash led to one side's defeat, he argued, then it would have to seek salvation by gaining time to build up new forces. But these forces might not be available, having been depleted by the first mobilization. Then, the first armed clash, he concluded, would have determined the outcome of the entire war.

Von Bernhardi's ideas reflected the thoughts and aspirations of the German military elite and its masters, the German industrialists and financial magnates. They also reflected the official view of the German general staff and its new chief, Helmuth von Moltke [a nephew of Field Marshal von Moltke—U.S. Ed.].

The younger von Moltke, an open supporter of Schlieffen's ideas, proposed that in the first stage of war the main forces should be concentrated on the Western Front against France, the chief and most dangerous enemy. It was thought that the defeat of France would be achieved in one operation (in 6 weeks) by making a powerful surprise attack through neutral Belgium with the subsequent deep envelopment of the major forces of the French army. Only after the defeat of France was it planned to turn the main forces against Russia.

The principal flaw in the German war plan was that it did not reflect the real balance of forces between Germany and its enemies. It was constructed on an exaggerated notion of the strength and capabilities of the German army, and

on a clear underestimation of the forces and capabilities of its enemies. The adventurist nature of this plan was confirmed by the course of the war.

French military doctrine differed greatly from the German, although at its basis it also had an offensive character. According to M. V. Frunze, it differed from German doctrine "in a feeling of uncertainty in its own forces, the absence of broad offensive plans, the inability to boldly seek a solution to combat, and in the desire to impose its will on the enemy without considering the will of the latter."[6]

In the prewar years the most varied views were advanced in France on the probable character of a future war and the methods of starting it. French military theory on the whole was marked by a general tendency toward a passive wait-and-see strategy that gave the initiative to the enemy, and by a desire to elaborate at the start of war a plan of operations that would be universal—that is, applicable to the conditions created by any variation of the enemy's operations.

A distinguishing feature of the French war plans, right up to Plan No. 17, with which France entered the war, was that the final decision on the choice of the direction of the main attack was not to be made until the enemy's intentions had been fully exposed. This determined in advance the plan for the strategic deployment of the French armies proposed by General Bonnal, the author of Strategic Plan No. 14. Since Bonnal excluded the possibility of a German attack through neutral Belgium, or in any event considered it improbable, he proposed that the main mass of forces be concentrated on the Alsatian axis, to the south of Verdun, feeling that the main German forces would be deployed on this axis. He also proposed that the forces be deployed in three echelons: the forward army would be deployed along the border as the first echelon; behind it would be three armies of the second echelon; further back in the rear would come the reserve army. This plan of deployment provided, in his opinion, the possibility of responding flexibly to any variation of the enemy's operations.

Bonnal's views were sharply criticized by a colonel on the French general staff, Grandmaison, who was a protege of General Joffre, chief of the general staff from 1911 through 1914. Grandmaison was a proponent of an unconditional offensive on a previously selected axis from the start of war. According to Grandmaison, at the start of war, without waiting for the completion of concentration, the forward formations and the main forces following behind them must immediately go over to the offensive to impose their will on the enemy. However, it must be noted that Grandmaison's views were not actually reflected in the official strategic concept of the general staff and its war plans.

The military figure and theorist F. Foch exerted a great influence on the formation of French military doctrine. From 1907 through 1911 he held the post of chief of the military academy in France, and at the end of World War I headed the command of the joint Anglo-French forces. Foch was a supporter of an

offensive strategy, but at the same time he decisively rejected the Grandmaison strategy of "an offensive no matter what the cost." The defense, in Foch's view, was as natural a type of combat operation as the offense.

Foch, like Schlieffen, considered it possible to achieve the ultimate political goals of a war in a brief campaign. He attached particular importance to the first engagements of the main forces, which, he felt, would play the decisive role in a future war. Preparations for the initial operations, the elaboration of their strategies, and all-round support, Foch asserted, should make up the core of the war plan.

Foch, like Joffre and the other representatives of the French general staff, had little confidence in the possibility of a German offensive through Belgium. He assumed that for France the main theater of operations would be Alsace and Lorraine. But such a seemingly clear strategic design was intertwined with Foch's arguments against Bonnal's ideas and, in particular, against the desire not to make a final decision on the axis of the main attack until the enemy's intentions were fully determined.

Joffre also adhered to these views in working out the final, seventeenth variation of the war plan. Planning the strategic deployment of the French army and its initial operations, and desiring to preempt Germany in its strategic deployment, he proposed first to fully determine Germany's intentions, and then, in accord with the enemy's plan, to select the most effective axis for the main attack.

Thus, the basic concept of French Plan No. 17, like the plans preceding it, remained the idea of a defensive offensive, which was, in essence, a wait-and-see strategy without the desire of seizing the strategic initiative.

On the eve of World War I Russian military doctrine was filled with a spirit of offensive strategy. At the same time, in military theoretical works by Russian military researchers, and in the war plans worked out by the Russian general staff, there was the notion that Russia would inevitably be late in deploying its armed forces and would not be able to begin the war with a strategic offensive because of its economic backwardness, poorly developed railroad network, and vast territory. For this reason, the army, in its war plans for the initial period, intended to resort temporarily to a strategic defense before the full completion of its strategic concentration and deployment. These ideas were put forth and substantiated by many Russian military scholars and leaders, and in particular by Professor A. Neznamov of the Nikolayevsk General Staff Academy. In 1909 he published his work *Defensive Warfare*, which reflected not only the view of the author himself and of a large group of military writers, but also, to a great degree, reflected the official view of the general staff.

A. Neznamov recognized the natural desire to make a war as short as possible.[7] An armed clash between the nations with developed economies and dense

railroad networks, he asserted, "would take place during the time closest to the start of the war and near the border itself, since both sides would be ready simultaneously for such a clash . . ." [8] Each side would naturally try to the utmost to make use of its preparedness to deal a decisive defeat to the enemy. But, the author noted, there were a number of nations that were quite rich, but had a vast territory, a very long land border, and a diverse population (of course, he had Russia in mind), and these nations were deprived by their very size of the possibility of completing the mobilization and transportation of their forces to strategic deployment points as rapidly as smaller nations with a homogeneous population. "Thus, they are **temporarily** unprepared to start decisive operations immediately: they are still unable **to put into motion all that they desire and can do**, and for the present they must **delay** a decision by gaining time."[9] For precisely this reason, he said, at the start of a war these nations are temporarily forced to assume a defensive strategy in order to go over later to decisive offensive operations under more favorable conditions. Thus, Neznamov concluded, the ultimate goal of the defense is completely the same as that of the offensive—**victory over the enemy** in a decisive clash—but the immediate task of the defense is to delay the outcome until a favorable time.[10]

As for the methods of conducting the initial defensive operations, Neznamov was in favor of a flexible, active, and fluid defense. He felt that until the defending side could achieve the necessary favorable conditions for a decisive engagement, it should not allow the enemy to impose this engagement on it. In avoiding this, and in grinding down the enemy by rearguard action, individual engagements and attacks against enemy flanks and lines of communications, and by sacrificing territory, one should work persistently to alter the balance of forces. In truth, the author stipulated that such a method of conducting a defense is available only to a nation with a large territory. But, he stressed, the nation that has vast expanses has a limit in maneuvering over territory, and this limit must be set by the defensive plan. The defending side should determine ahead of time at what point in the defensive battles it is advisable to begin the general engagement. It must also decide whether favorable conditions have developed for this and at what final line the engagement must be accepted under any conditions. "In elaborating the war plan, the deliberations about defense should be directed toward this decisive engagement."[11]

All the versions of the plan of a future war on which the Russian general staff was working, including the plan worked out in 1910, were based on the idea of a "deployment backwards"—the intentional abandoning of the so-called forward theater (the Polish salient of Osovets, Kalish, and Tomashev) and the shifting of the deployment line to Vilna, Belostok, Brest, Rovno, and Kamenets-Podolskiy. However, this was the last defensive version of the plan for entering the war. Soon after that it was replaced by other versions of the plan that were directly opposite in character.

Russia, financially dependent on its ally France, was forced to conclude a military-political agreement with it in 1911 that obliged the tsarist government to undertake concomitantly with France a decisive offensive against Germany at the start of war. "France," this agreement noted, "will deploy 1.5 million men on its northeastern front on the 10th day of mobilization. Russia will deploy up to 800,000 men against Germany on the 15th day of mobilization, and the offensive will start immediately after the 15th day."[12] This obligation was impossible for Russia to satisfy, but France insisted on it, calculating that an immediate offensive by Russian forces would divert most of the German forces to the Eastern Front and would make it possible for the French army to successfully carry out the missions confronting it.

The new war plan approved by the government on 1 May 1912 called for mounting an offensive simultaneously against both Germany and Austria–Hungary on the date stipulated by the agreement. On the Russo–German Front the immediate goal of the offensive was the seizure of East Prussia and the occupation of an advantageous position for undertaking operations on the Berlin axis; on the Russo–Austrian Front concentric attacks were to be made against the grouping of Austrian forces concentrated in Galicia in order to rout them and create the conditions for mounting an offensive on the Budapest and Belgrade axes. If it is considered that by the 15th day of mobilization Russia was able to concentrate only one-third of its entire army on the planned deployment lines,[13] it becomes obvious that the plan for conducting the initial operations did not correspond to the country's actual capabilities. The plan forced the Russian command to begin an offensive without having completed the deployment of its main forces. This threatened the rapid loss of the strategic initiative and, consequently, the ruin of the plans of the initial operations. The first weeks of the war confirmed this quite graphically.

A comparison of the military doctrines of Germany, France, and Russia and their plans for entering World War I reveals substantial differences among them. Germany had clearly articulated aggressive offensive plans supported by a strong economy. Although adhering to an offensive strategy, France, on entering the war, made its methods of army operations dependent on its enemy's intentions and methods of operations. Germany and France were prepared to enter the initial operations with their armies already fully deployed. In an effort to seize the strategic initiative, Russia intended to enter the war with only part of its forces, without waiting for the completion of deployment.

At the same time, there was also much in common in the strategic plans of the three major European nations. They all set for themselves very decisive political goals and felt that combat operations from the first clashes until the end of the war would have an active and fluid character. These nations were counting on the possibility of completing the war in a short time using the mobilization reserves of military equipment, weapons, and ammunition that they had stockpiled before the war. Germany, France, and Russia all attached decisive

importance to the initial operations of the main forces and counted on preempting their enemies, or, in any event, on not lagging behind them in conducting mobilization and strategic deployment. The following period of the war was viewed by them as a time for the singular exploitation of the initial success achieved in the first operations.

4. The Experience and Lessons of the Entry Into World War I

The world war that started in 1914 was much more complex than it had seemed to the military theorists. Many of the calculations and suppositions that had been thought up before the war were far from actual reality. The war brought the belligerents many bitter surprises and, above all, shattered their hopes of achieving a quick victory.

As is well known, the formal pretext for the start of World War I was the murder of the heir to the Austrian throne in Sarajevo, the capital of Serbia. This took place on 28 June 1914, and on 28 July, Austria-Hungary declared war on Serbia. In response to this, on 31 July, Russia began a general mobilization. Germany took advantage of Russia's action as an excuse for its own mobilization and, after accusing Russia of provoking armed conflict, declared war on 1 August. On 3 August, Germany declared war on Russia's ally France, and on 4 August, invaded Belgium. This gave England a reason (the defense of Belgian neutrality) to declare war on Germany.

However, the formal declaration of war still did not mean that the nations could immediately begin active offensive operations on their selected strategic axes. A certain time was required to carry out the mobilization, deployment, and movement of their forces up to the lines intended in their plans for the initial operations.

The nations' preparations to enter the initial operations of World War I had their special features. One of them was that all the nations attempted to preempt their enemies in the strategic deployment of their main forces, thus reducing the time between the declaration of war and the start of decisive operations. Even during the prewar period they had carried out many of the preparatory mobilization measures that in previous wars were carried out, as a rule, after the declaration of war. Most of the nations in the so-called premobilization period (announced in Russia, Germany, France, and Austria-Hungary 5 to 6 days before the official declaration of war) cancelled the leaves of officer personnel, brought the mobilization system to readiness, carried out a partial call-up of reservists, brought the military supplies of their forces up to wartime levels, began the concealed advance of their covering forces to the border, and issued orders to bring their fleets, fortresses, railroads, and so forth to combat readiness. Even the general mobilization in Russia, Germany, France, and Austria-Hungary was

actually begun before the formal declaration of war. As a result, the time during which the mobilization, concentration, and deployment of the forces were carried out—the period of the war from its declaration to the start of operations by the main forces—was greatly shortened in comparison with previous wars.

The mobilization of the German and French armies was completed by 5 August, and the movement of forces to the concentration areas was completed by 17 August in Germany and by 19 August in France. Austria-Hungary completed its mobilization by 14 August, and the concentration of its main forces on the Russian border by 20 August. Because of the vastness of its territory and its underdeveloped railroad network, Russia was much slower than the other nations in deploying its armies. In the border areas mobilization was completed on the 6th day, in the interior regions on the 8th, and in a number of areas far from the center, on the 21st. On the whole, the mobilization and concentration of the forces were carried out more rapidly than ever before.

In World War I, even more clearly than in the Russo-Japanese War, one could see a tendency for the covering forces to play a more active combat role. In Germany, for example, the forces assigned to cover the western border during the general mobilization had been moved up to the Belgian border even before the start of the war and were to start combat operations on the day of mobilization. Their main mission was to seize advantageous positions on Belgian territory for the deployment of the main forces. On 4 August, the day after the declaration of war, a German detachment of 25,000 bayonets and 8,000 sabers, supported by 124 guns, invaded Belgian territory. Several days later, three German army corps were committed to the operation.

The French army, which had intended to make its main attack on the Alsace axis, conducted a number of individual operations from 7 to 23 August, even before completing the concentration of its main forces, to capture mountain passes in the Ardennes and Vosges. The major forces of both sides were gradually committed to these operations, which were carried out with varying success.

The covering forces in the Russian army also carried out active missions. On the eve of the war, the Russian command had formed two groups: one under the command of General Khan Nakhichevanskiy included 4 divisions (76 squadrons, 48 horse-drawn guns, and 3 machine guns), and the other under the command of General Gurko consisted of 3 cavalry detachments and an infantry column (5 Cossack squadrons, 10 other squadrons, 2 infantry battalions, 15 machine guns, and 16 artillery pieces). After invading the territory of East Prussia during the first days of the war, these mobile groups conducted a series of diversionary attacks in the enemy rear.

The Austrian army also conducted a major diversion during the first days of the war, successfully carrying out the operation of seizing the Tanew forest zone.

This was done to capture an advantageous starting line for the subsequent offensive between the Bug and the Vistula.

The German command carried out the strategic deployment of its army most successfully. The main forces of the German army were ready to engage in decisive operations before the armies of the other nations. And when its covering forces invaded Belgium, these forces made a strong flank attack against the French army from the advantageous lines captured by them. In 2 weeks the German forces had inflicted a major defeat on the allied armies, and by the start of September had thrown them back to the Marne.

The French command, which had deployed its armed forces at the same time as the Germans, lost about 3 weeks while determining the strategy of the German command and redeploying its forces to the north. As a result, the French army lost the border engagement.

Trying to meet its obligations to France, the Russian command undertook offensive operations in East Prussia before completing the concentration and deployment of its forces. This led quickly to the defeat of the two armies on the Northwestern Front.

The advance of Russian forces into Galicia began also before the deployment of the main forces on the Southwestern Front had been completed. But, since the Austrian forces were in an even more difficult position than the Russians, due to major mistakes made in their deployment, the engagement in Galicia in August-September 1914 ended with a victory for the Russian armies.

After the end of the initial operations, both warring coalitions conducted a new series of simultaneous and sequential operations on both the Western and Eastern fronts. However, the men and equipment required to turn the tactical successes into strategic ones were unavailable to either side. Even as early as September, on the Western Front, an unbroken static front had been established from the sea through Verdun to the Swiss border. In December the front in the east was also stabilized.

Thus, the initial operations, which, according to the calculations on both sides, should have determined the outcome of the war in advance, did not bring the expected results. Instead of the fluid blitzkrieg war that the belligerents had prepared for, they found themselves fighting an extended static war that lasted over 4 years.

At the same time, World War I confirmed and strengthened the trends that had appeared in the wars of the nineteenth century: first, the trend toward starting military operations in the interval between the declaration of war and the

commitment of the main forces to battle; and, second, the tendency for the initial clash of the main forces to occur earlier in the war.

For the first time, one could also see the distinct tendency of the belligerents to put into effect, even before declaring war, certain preparatory measures that in the nineteenth century were usually carried out after the declaration of war. This trend was brought about by the identical desire of the belligerents to preempt their enemies in carrying out a number of political and military activities that would supposedly provide the key to victory to the side accomplishing them first.

The character of the initial period of war continued to change under the decisive influence of these trends. The proportion of this period devoted to military operations increased while that allotted to preparatory measures decreased. And the initial period assumed traits that had not existed previously. In particular, during this period the men and materiel with which the belligerents carried out strategic missions increased sharply in number and amount, while the combat activity of the forces took on a clearly dynamic character.

Notes

1. See I. S. Bliokh, *Budushchaya voyna* [Future Warfare] (St. Petersburg, 1898), II, 37.
2. G. Leyer, *Strategiya* [Strategy] (St. Petersburg, 1898), II, 96.
3. Ibid., p. 97.
4. N. A. Levitskiy, *Russko-yaponskaya voyna 1904–1905 gg.* [The Russo-Japanese War 1904–1905] (Moscow: Voyenizdat, 1936), p. 71.
5. Ibid., p. 75.
6. M. V. Frunze, *Izbrannyye proizvedeniya* [Selected Works] (Moscow: Voyenizdat, 1951), p. 146.
7. See A. Neznamov, *Oboronitel'naya voyna* [Defensive Warfare] (St. Petersburg: Izdatel'stvo Nikolayevskoy akademii General'nogo shtaba, 1909), p. 3.
8. Ibid.
9. Ibid., p. 10.
10. Ibid., pp. 10, 12.
11. Ibid., p. 160.
12. Quoted in V. A. Melikov, *Strategicheskoye razvertyvaniye* [Strategic Deployment] (Moscow: Voyenizdat, 1939), p. 207.
13. See A. Kolenkovskiy, *Manevrennyy period pervoy mirovoy imperialisticheskoy voyny 1914 g.* [The Fluid Period of the Imperialist First World War 1914] (Moscow: Voyenizdat, 1940), pp. 63–64. [Hereafter cited as Kolenkovskiy—U.S. Ed.]

Chapter 2. The Organizational Development of the Armed Forces and the Development of Military Theories in the Main Capitalist Nations Between the Two World Wars

World War I led to further intensification of the political, economic, and social conflicts inherent in capitalist society and caused social upheavals in a number of nations. The bourgeoisie was overthrown and a dictatorship of the proletariat established in Russia. Imperialism thus lost its influence over one-sixth of the planet, and capitalism ceased to be the single, all-embracing economic system in the world. This introduced a new factor into international relations: irreconcilable class conflicts between the world of capitalism and a nation of socialism.

Along with the main conflict of the period, conflicts in the capitalist world itself continued to exist and intensify. The system of postwar peace treaties, which had redrawn the planet's political map and legalized the dominant position of the victorious nations in the capitalist world, gave birth to the idea of revenge by the conquered nations and soon ceased to satisfy most of the victorious nations themselves.

Germany, which had recovered from its defeat in the war, persistently strove to restore its prewar borders, regain its lost colonies, and expand its sphere of influence. Japanese monopolies emerged and demanded new markets and new sources of raw materials. Nor was Italy satisfied with the world map as redrawn under the peace treaties. That nation's ruling circles considered that Italy had received too little in payment for its entry into the war on the side of the Entente. The U.S., which had profited from World War I and occupied a leading position in the capitalist world following the war, was straining to dominate the world. These conflicts were especially forcefully manifested during the economic crisis at the end of the 1920s and start of the 1930s. "None of the capitalist nations is now satisfied by the old distribution of colonies and spheres of influence," the Central Committee's political report to the 16th AUCP(b) Congress pointed out in 1930. "They can see that the balance of power has changed and that they must accordingly redivide markets, sources of raw materials, spheres of influence, and so forth."[1]

In 1933 in Germany the establishment of a fascist regime—an openly terrorist dictatorship of monopolistic capital's more reactionary chauvinistic circles—that openly proclaimed a policy of revenge and seizure of foreign territories led to further exacerbation of international relations and to an intense arms race.

"Once again, just as in 1914," it was pointed out at the 17th AUCP(b) Congress in 1934, "parties of militant imperialism, parties of war and revenge are moving to the fore.

"The situation is clearly leading to a new war."[2]

In 1935 imperialist Japan renewed its aggressive military operations against China. A new source of war emerged in Central Europe in 1936, when fascist Germany's forces invaded the Rhineland and approached the borders of France.

In 1935 fascist Italy undertook acts of aggression against Ethiopia, and the next year Germany and Italy ignited a civil war in Spain.

The so-called Anti-Comintern Pact, directed squarely against the USSR, was drawn up in 1936–1937 between Germany, Italy, and Japan.

The aggressive operations of Germany, Italy, and Japan, which had entered into a close military and political alliance, directly affected the interests of the U.S., England, and France. Instead of setting out to repel the aggression collectively, however, as persistently called for by the Soviet Union, the ruling circles of those nations took a position of noninterference, which in fact amounted to encouragement of the aggression and its "channelization" to the east, against the USSR.

Under the direct influence of the greatly intensified conflicts in the capitalist world, two opposing groups formed: German–Italian–Japanese and Anglo–French–American. In the end, both of these imperalist groups strove to put an end to the land of socialism but planned to achieve this goal by different methods. Nations in the fascist bloc—Germany, Italy, and Japan—intended to destroy the Soviet Union with a military attack by their own forces; the Anglo–French–American coalition hoped to do this with someone else's forces, "channeling" their aggression toward the east.

The political situation that developed between the two world wars had a direct effect on the organizational development of the armed forces and on the development of methods of conducting the future war.

1. Principal Trends in the Organizational Development of the Armed Forces of the Main Capitalist Nations

The first distinguishing feature in the organizational development of the armed forces of the main capitalist nations between the two world wars was that they were created and developed as mass armies. During this period, the size of the armies in most of the capitalist nations remained approximately on the level of the prewar months of 1914. If one takes the overall size of the armies of the five powers (France, Italy, Great Britain, the U.S., and Japan), it was 2,408,700 men in 1914, 2,531,000 men in 1925, and 2,532,500 men in 1933.[3]

The desire of the bourgeois governments to maintain large armed forces in peacetime was explained by a number of factors. First, the acute contradictions between the victors and the vanquished in World War I and between the capitalist world and the Soviet socialist state could develop into a military clash at any moment chosen by the aggressive imperialist powers. For any unforeseen eventuality, each nation held a strong mailed fist in combat readiness. Second, the peacetime army was given the role of the personnel backbone for deploying a large wartime army. The army had to have a sufficiently large number of regular officers, junior officers, and rank and file to be used after a general mobilization for the rapid deployment of forces according to wartime tables of organization.* Third, the peacetime army was the basic school for training reserves for deploying a wartime army and replenishing it during a war. World War I showed that the larger the peacetime armies, the greater the opportunities for training sizeable reserves.†

To increase the capabilities of the peacetime army to train sizeable reserves, the periods of active military service were reduced. In many nations 2-year active service was instituted instead of 3-year. In certain nations, for example, in Italy, active service was reduced to 18 months, and in France to 1 year.

Paramilitary training of reservists was developed widely through civilian training facilities, various volunteer societies, and youth, military-sports, labor, and other organizations. In the leading capitalist countries the size of these societies and organizations in the 1930s greatly exceeded the number of army personnel.

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*Before World War I the peacetime divisions had, in relation to the wartime tables, the following percentages of personnel: Germany—100 percent of the officers, around 70 percent of the junior officers, and 50 percent of the rank and file; France—76.4 percent of the officers, 54.5 percent of the junior officers, and 43.6 percent of the rank and file; Russia—85 percent of the officers, 42 percent of the junior officers, and 48 percent of the rank and file (see *Voyna i voyennoye delo* [War and Military Affairs] (Moscow: Voyenizdat, 1938), p. 94).

†On the eve of World War I Russia, with a regular peacetime army of 1.36 million men, was able to create a trained reserve of 5.65 million; France, which maintained an army of 816,000 men, had created a trained reserve of 5,067,000; Germany, which possessed an army of 788,000 men, had accumulated 4.9 million reservists; and Austria-Hungary, whose army numbered 410,000 men, had 3 million reservists (see Kolenkovskiy, p. 26).

The police, border, sentry, and other special-purpose forces played a prominent role in preparing trained reserves.

Despite the well-known Versailles limitations, paramilitary training of reserves was carried out particularly widely in Germany, and this was concealed. Throughout the country a widespread network of secret militarist volunteer organizations was created under the guise of various cultural and sports societies, militarized detachments of the fascist party, unions of war veterans, associations of fellow countrymen, and so forth, in which preinduction groups underwent military training. By the time universal military conscription was introduced in Germany (1935) in violation of the Versailles Treaty, these organizations had trained around 7 million reservists.

The organizational development of the armed forces in the leading capitalist nations as mass armies, along with the broad use of paramilitary training, made it possible for their governments to call to arms millions of trained reservists on the eve of, and during, World War II, and to field even more sizeable armed forces than in World War I.

The second distinguishing feature in the organizational development of the armed forces was that this development was carried out during a time of intensified development of the air forces, motorization and mechanization of the armies, and automation of their weapons. This particular feature was a result, on one hand, of the experience and lessons of World War I and, on the other, the growth of production and the major advances in all areas of science and technology.

Analyzing the reasons for the collapse of the plans of the general staffs in World War I to win victory during the first rapid fluid operations, military researchers established that the armies of the belligerents did not have the material and technical prerequisites to achieve this goal. The firepower, mobility, and maneuverability of the armies were insufficient to make crushing attacks against the enemy during the first operations to further "exploit" the initial success as soon as possible. At the same time, the victory of the Entente over Germany in the final stage of the war, in the opinion of many researchers, was achieved because of the superiority of the French, English, and American forces in the quantity and quality of military equipment and weapons, particularly aviation and tanks. The theorists and practical specialists in military affairs became convinced that, in a future war, the way to successfully accomplish missions during the initial operations lay in equipping the forces with the maximum amount of military equipment and weapons, primarily with tanks and aviation, which were capable of sharply increasing the firepower, maneuverability, and mobility of the armies.

Scientific and technological progress, as well as the increased economic resources of the major capitalist powers, made it possible to develop new, more

advanced models of military equipment and weapons and to organize their mass production.

The development of aviation technology and the change in the role of the air forces. Aircraft performance between 1918 and 1939 improved substantially. During this period the operational ceiling of fighter aircraft increased from 7,000 to 11,000 m, of single-engine bombers from 5,500 to 9,000 m, and of twin-engine bombers from 4,000 to 9,000 m. The maximum speeds also increased: for fighters, from 220 to 570 km per hour, and for single-engine bombers, from 180 to 450 km per hour. Aircraft armament became much more powerful. There was an increase in the number and caliber of machine guns, and small-caliber cannon began to be installed on aircraft. Bombers could take off with high-explosive bombs weighing 1,000 to 2,000 kg. All of this sharply increased aircraft combat capabilities. Air forces were changed from an auxiliary arm in World War I into an independent service of the armed forces.

The motorization and mechanization of the ground forces. In the organizational development of the ground forces in the major capitalist nations the main efforts were aimed at improving such "parameters" as mobility and maneuverability. This was achieved by widely introducing vehicles of various types and purposes at the unit level. In mechanizing the ground forces the general approach was to develop tanks capable of rapidly breaking through static defenses and using the breakthrough for a rapid offensive to great depth.

Great attention was devoted to developing tracked, half-track, and wheeled vehicles for combat, support, and auxiliary purposes, including self-propelled guns, mineclearing tanks, flamethrower tanks, armored vehicles, personnel carriers, tractors, and so forth.

At the same time that the armies were being equipped with large numbers of combat vehicles, there was a rapid motorization of the combat arms. In the developed capitalist nations combat and transport vehicles replaced the horse to a great extent for combat and transportation needs and provided the conditions for creating the mobile formations that would play the decisive role on the battlefields.

Conventional artillery weapons also underwent substantial changes. The basic trends in their development consisted in the automation of all types of weapons, an increase in the mass of fire and its destructive force, and in the development of an effective weapon to combat tanks and aircraft. Troops began to be armed with large quantities of rapid-fire antiaircraft and antitank artillery of various calibers, and with field artillery of much greater range, rate of fire, and mobility. The proportion of mortars rose noticeably.

Along with the growth of the air forces and the equipping of the ground forces with improved materiel, **the quantitative and qualitative growth of the navies**

was continued. The major sea powers spared no effort in the modernization of ships of all classes, attempting to build ships that were best adapted to the conditions of sea warfare. The basic trends in ship modernization included an increase in their seaworthiness and speed, an increase in range, a higher rate of fire for naval ordnance, an increase in the power and armor-piercing ability of projectiles, an improvement in torpedo armament, and so forth. By the start of World War II speed had increased, in comparison with 1914, by 35 percent for battleships, 33 to 35 percent for light cruisers, 20 percent for destroyer leaders, 21 percent for destroyers, and 20 percent for submarines. Range had increased by 122 percent for battleships, 155 percent for light cruisers, 71 percent for destroyer leaders, 57 percent for destroyers, and 150 to 233 percent for submarines.[4] The major sea powers, particularly Japan, attached great importance to developing a new class of aircraft carriers. During the last years before the war all the major navies of the world were devoting attention to the development of locating devices using ultrashortwaves above water and ultrasound below.

The quantitative and qualitative growth of the navies substantially increased their combat capabilities. Because of the increase in range, the greater firepower, the heavy antiaircraft cover, and particularly the appearance of aircraft carriers and carrier-based aviation, the navies acquired great range and the ability to operate for an extended time far from base, to penetrate the most remote areas of the ocean expanses, and to conduct independent naval operations.

The character and the specific features of the organizational development of the armed forces between the two world wars did much to determine in advance the development of the military theories of the bourgeois nations and the elaboration of the forms and methods of combat employment of the various services and combat arms of the armed forces.

2. Theories of Small Professional Armies

Most bourgeois military theorists, looking at World War I, more or less accurately judged the role of tanks and aviation on the future battlefields, assuming that they would greatly increase the capability of armies to conduct operations to great depth at high rates. However, many military theorists in the capitalist nations, under the influence of sociopolitical factors, were captivated by the idea of "technicism." They propagated erroneous ideas on the possibility of achieving victory in a future war using small but well-equipped professional armies. It seemed to them that such armies, staffed with personnel reliable in class terms, could deal a decisive defeat to an enemy even in the initial operations, which meant achieving the goal planned but not attained in the past war. These ideas were embodied in the theories of independent aerial warfare, mechanized and tank warfare, and so forth.

The theory of aerial warfare was worked out by the Italian general Giulio Douhet. The basic ideas of his theory were set forth in his works *Air Supremacy* and *The War of 19__*. The essence of Douhet's views was that the air force would be the decisive weapon of war. Its primary mission would be to win air supremacy. After accomplishing this mission and after developing extensive offensive operations against the enemy's vital centers, the air force, Douhet asserted, would so suppress the enemy's ability to resist that the further conduct of the war would become impossible and the country would surrender.

The English general John Fuller was a proponent of mechanized war. In 1922 he published a book titled *Tanks in the Great War of 1914–1918*. The basic thesis of this book was the assertion that the Entente had won the war because of its tanks. The main conclusion the author drew from the war was that the decisive role in a future war would be played not by mass armies but by small, professional, mechanized armies. "...I believe in mechanical warfare, that is, in an army which is equipped with machines and which will require few personnel...." wrote Fuller.[5] In another place he formulated his idea even more clearly: "...The ideal army to strive to create will consist not of an armed nation, but of a single person, and not a person with excessive training, but simply one able to push a button or remove a plug and thus activate the machines invented by the finest minds of science in peacetime."[6]

It is easy to see that both the theory of aerial warfare and the theory of mechanized warfare had a fundamental flaw. The authors were clearly trying to carry out the demand made by the imperialist bourgeoisie—to free it from politically unreliable mass armies, without which victory on the battlefield was impossible to achieve, as World War I had shown. These theories were also not supported by military technology. They overestimated the combat capabilities of aviation and tanks and underestimated the other types of combat equipment and weapons. Finally, they suffered from being divorced from reality: they were constructed without considering the financial and economic strain that would be required to create and maintain the air and mechanized forces and that would be beyond the capacity of even the developed nations. For this reason these theories were rejected as unsound. The armies of the leading capitalist nations were organized and developed as mass armies.

But in the works of Douhet and Fuller there were ideas that, to a certain degree, accurately depicted the objective processes taking place in the development of military affairs. Among these one could put, for example, the notion of the growing role of aviation and mobile forces in warfare, their massed use on decisive axes, and the growing role of the initial operations in a future war. These ideas were recognized in a number of nations and had a marked influence on the organizational development of the armed forces and the formation of military doctrines.

3. Theories of Total War and Blitzkrieg

The theories of total war and blitzkrieg were adopted by the bloc of aggressive imperialist nations (Germany, Italy, and Japan). These theories were most fully embodied in the military strategy of fascist Germany.

One of the creators of the theory of total war was the prominent ideologist of German militarism, General Ludendorff. In 1935 he published the book *Total War*, in which he set forth his "philosophy" of war. Total war, according to Ludendorff, was a merciless war for annihilation. It was conducted with a maximum exertion of all the material and spiritual forces of a nation, using not only the armed forces but all accessible means and methods of political, economic, and psychological warfare. In a total war, Ludendorff felt, there could be political betrayal and fierce terror against the population of the enemy nation, including its partial or even complete destruction.

Ludendorff did not deny that total war would possibly be long and stubborn, but for Germany this could mean defeat, he said, since its economy could not withstand an extended strain. Nor was Ludendorff confident that the maximum exertion of the material and spiritual capabilities of the nation would be within the power of the broad masses of the German people. The lessons of World War I were a reminder that a limit could be reached in the patience and endurance of the people. And to avoid such a turn of events, Ludendorff recommended to the military command that total war be completed as quickly as possible, so that its outcome would not be jeopardized by economic difficulties and a loss of unity in the people. In such a way in Ludendorff's reasoning did the theories of total war and blitzkrieg come together.

The essence of the blitzkrieg theory, according to Ludendorff, consisted in using from the start of war such factors as a surprise attack with superior forces and equipment to deal a decisive defeat to the first strategic echelon of troops (the covering army), and then to develop a rapid offensive into the interior of the nation to complete the enemy's defeat before it was able to mobilize and use its potential military and economic capabilities.

Like Schlieffen and the younger von Moltke, Ludendorff felt that Germany must avoid a war fought simultaneously on two fronts. The point of his military and political recommendations came down to dividing Germany's probable enemies and putting them in opposition to one another or neutralizing one of them for a certain time, thus providing for the defeat of each enemy one by one. Ludendorff also assumed a situation where Germany would have to fight on two fronts. For this eventuality he called for a maximum concentration of forces against the main enemy in a decisive sector of the chosen battle front to deal a decisive defeat to the enemy in this sector as quickly as possible; then would come a shift of the main effort to the other front to defeat the new enemy.

Ludendorff attached great importance to seizing the strategic initiative. "Only the side that seizes the initiative can achieve victory," he wrote.[7] One of the conditions for seizing the initiative was a surprise attack without a declaration of war. "A war should never begin with its declaration,"[8] said this archmilitarist, referring to the examples of the Japanese–Chinese, Russo–Japanese, and Boer wars at the start of the twentieth century.

With the rise to power of fascism and the restoration of the German general staff, the group of so-called young general staff officers, such as Leeb, Beck, Guderian, Lutz, Ehrfurt, and others, took an active part in examining the problems of a future war and its initial operations. They took over the Ludendorff heritage and used it widely to work out plans of aggressive warfare.

By the start of World War II the German general staff had worked out a well-defined system of views on the methods of unleashing and conducting an aggressive war. It saw a path toward achieving the goals of war through a surprise attack on the enemy and a massed attack against it at the start. The crushing might of the attack was to shake the enemy armed forces to their foundation during the first hours and days of the war, disorganize the enemy's government and military control, thwart mobilization, and thus determine ahead of time a favorable outcome of the war.

In making the first attack the decisive role was given to the air force and the tank forces. The air force was to win air supremacy and paralyze the enemy rear by heavy bombing attacks. The tank forces, relying on air support, were to quickly break through enemy defenses and tear the front to shreds, and then, together with the motorized, airborne, and infantry formations, destroy the enemy forces in rapid and fluid operations. In making the first attack preference was given to encircling operations as the most decisive method of defeating the enemy.

To achieve surprise in the first attack the German general staff carefully planned and then carried out in the prewar period such measures as mobilization, concentration, and deployment of its forces. Thus, it intentionally eliminated from the initial period of the war certain measures that in previous wars had usually been carried out after the declaration of war.

By mobilizing, concentrating, and deploying its forces in the prewar period, the aggressor, at the start of the war, was able to set as the immediate strategic goal the defeat of the enemy's main forces. This virtually nullified traditional notions on the content of military operations during the first operations.

Before World War II the views of the military and political leadership of fascist Italy on the character and methods of starting and waging war did not differ fundamentally from German views. They were based on the ideas of total war and blitzkrieg. However, the ruling fascist clique in Italy took up these ideas only after the Nazis had come to power in Germany and had concluded a close

military-political alliance with Italy. Before this, the views on military theory in Italy were characterized by "offshoots" ranging from active, offensive doctrines like the Douhet doctrine to purely defensive ideas.

The decisive strategic concepts borrowed by the fascist military and political leadership of Italy from Hitlerite Germany were in clear contradiction to the limited military and economic capabilities of the nation.

The theories of total war and blitzkrieg lay at the heart of the views on military theory of the Japanese militarists and the military plans of imperialist Japan. In this nation recognition was given to the entire range of methods and procedures for starting and waging war according to the formulas of these theories. Imperialist Japan, like fascist Germany, placed its main hope on achieving victory by dividing its enemies and defeating them one by one, and on such methods of waging war as a surprise attack on the enemy, a decisive massing of forces for the first attack, and so forth. Imperialist Japan, like fascist Germany, intended to shift its mobilization measures and the deployment of its armed forces from the initial period of the war to the prewar period.

The theories of total war and blitzkrieg were taken up by the nations of the aggressive bloc with good reason. They were worked out under the direct orders of the ruling circles of these nations, who had as their goal the violent repartitioning of the world. They entailed an enormous danger. The methods of starting and waging a war stemming from these theories, and the methods of barbaric physical and moral pressure on the troops and population of the nations subject to attack, could have, and in fact did have, tragic consequences for scores of millions of people.

4. Theories of War of Attrition

The military doctrines and the concepts of military theory in the capitalist nations (France, England, Poland, the U.S., and others) opposing the fascist bloc, although differing from one another, were characterized by one common feature: they all proceeded from the theory of a war of attrition. By this they differed sharply from the military doctrines and the concepts of military theory in the aggressor nations.

The theory of a war of attrition rested on the notion that a future war would be an extended war between coalitions requiring enormous economic, moral, and, particularly, military effort from the participants. Victory in a future war would be won—and this was the main thesis of the theory—by the side that could withstand this effort. The English and French ruling circles were convinced that since the military-economic advantage would belong to the Anglo-French coalition and its potential ally, the U.S., victory in a war would ultimately go to this coalition. It was reasoned that the outcome of the war would be determined

somewhere in its final stage because of the economic and moral exhaustion of the enemy under the crushing attacks of the Anglo-French-American coalition's increasingly powerful armies.

The theory and ensuing strategy of a war of attrition included a direct political calculation by the ruling circles of England, France, and the U.S. to force Germany and Japan into an armed conflict with the USSR. It was assumed that in this conflict the USSR, Germany, and Japan would so exhaust one another that the Anglo-French-American coalition, after entering the war in the final stage, would win a decisive victory and establish a dominant position for itself in the world.

The theory and strategy of a war of attrition carried the clear imprint of the uncritically accepted experience of World War I. In the official military views that prevailed, for example, in France, the model of a future war was viewed as almost an exact copy of the past war with its immobile, static forms of conducting combat operations designed to achieve victory over an enemy that had already depleted its military and economic potential.

The conservative-minded upper clique of the French military caste virtually overlooked the heated discussions that developed in the 1920s and 1930s on the pages of the military press about the trends in the development of military affairs and the new views on the character of a future war as a fluid war entailing deep operations of enormous scope and the massed use of aviation and tanks. As General de Gaulle wrote, "The military leaders were growing decrepit at their posts, remaining adherents of obsolete views that at one time had brought them glory."[9]

Looking at the past war and taking into account the increased firepower and improved engineer obstacles, French military leaders asserted that in the future the static forms of combat typical in the past war would find even wider application. For this reason the armies were confronted inevitably with the mission of breaking through a solid, fortified front. It seemed to them that the decisive role in achieving this goal, as before, would be played by infantry supported by artillery, heavy tanks, and aviation. The aviation and tanks, in their opinion, would play not a main but an auxiliary role. It was felt that if two million French soldiers with the required number of machine guns could be stationed along the 250-mile border provided with pillboxes, then the French forces would be able to check the German army for 3 years.

The views of French military theorists on the probable character of events at the start of the war also corresponded to the prevailing concepts of military theory in France. Thus, one of them, F. Kuhlmann, the author of the major work *Strategy*, which to a great degree reflected the official view, asserted that at the start of a war only the part of the armed forces that had been prepared in peacetime would be committed, while the main forces would join the army

n the field as industry was reorganized to meet war needs. On this basis Kuhlmann concluded that the gap between the start of the war and the first decisive operations by the main forces would be increased manyfold in comparison with previous wars.[9]

F. Kuhlmann attached primary importance to the prompt and safe strategic deployment of the main mass of the armed forces. From this came his great attention to the problems of providing cover for their strategic deployment. He felt that the combat activity of the covering forces would make up the basic content of the first period of a future war. Only after the army had been concentrated and deployed on the initial defensive lines, he asserted, would it be possible to think of creating an offensive grouping as called for by the war plan.

But other views were advanced in the French press of those years. For example, the French theorist General Alleo felt that to ensure the strategic deployment, it was essential even in peacetime to have a covering army ready for operations, leaving at the disposal of the high command a reserve of highly mobile mechanized and light assault formations. The mission of the reserve, after the advancing enemy forces were stopped by the covering army, was to enter into battle, to shift combat operations to enemy territory, and there to capture the strategic points and lines for the conduct of operations by the main forces.

De Gaulle held a firm view on the creation of a strong maneuverable army even in peacetime. In the book *For a Professional Army*, which appeared in 1934, he wrote, "We cannot . . . hope that poorly assembled and poorly equipped forces occupying hurriedly created defensive lines will be able to repel the first attack. An army made up of a mass of reservists and inductees makes up the basic element of national defense, but this army requires a great deal of time for concentration and engagement. The time has come when, alongside this army, there must be a close-knit, well-trained maneuverable army able to act without delay, that is, an army that is in constant readiness."[11]

However, these advanced views, which were rather widespread in the French army, were not accepted by official French doctrine. This doctrine rested firmly on the position of a passive wait-and-see strategy and was directed toward a static war. The French political and military leaders were convinced that France, in the event of war, would mobilize the maximum possible number of divisions and, taking cover behind the Maginot Line and the Belgian fortifications that were an extension of it, "would hold the enemy in check, until, exhausted by the blockade, it collapsed under the pressure of the free world."[12]

This concept, with minor changes, underlay the plans with which France entered World War II.

The ruling circles in England also intended to hold to a passive wait-and-see strategy in a future war. However, in the English version of this strategy there

was a special feature. The people in power in England did not intend to create a large land army. They felt that on land the conduct of combat operations would be undertaken by France and other allies. It was assumed that in an extended war England's partners would exhaust the human and material resources of Germany and its allies, enabling England to make a last attack against the enemy with a well-equipped army in the final stage of the war. "It must not be thought," said Churchill, "that very many people will be needed for this. . . . The rebelling indigenous population, for whom weapons must be supplied, will provide the basic mass of manpower for the liberation drive."[13]

The passive wait-and-see strategy at the start of the war was also the official military credo in the United States. The U.S. leaders felt that they should not hurry in entering the war. Such a view was cultivated in the U.S. not only on the eve of World War II, but also during its early months. Thus, on 26 June 1940, after the surrender of France, a commission under the U.S. joint chiefs of staff declared, "...As long as a choice remains for us, we should avoid a clash...."[14]

The idea of a wait-and-see strategy was expressed by Senator H. Truman with inimitable cynicism on 24 June 1941, after the attack by fascist Germany on the USSR. He stated, "If we see that Germany is winning, then we must help Russia, but if Russia is winning, then we must help Germany, and thus, let them kill as many as possible...."[15]

The strategy of bourgeois Poland, this dependent vassal ally of France and England, also was of a defensive wait-and-see character. In truth, the chief of the general staff of the Polish army, General Sikorskiy, was a supporter of an offensive strategy. However, he did not find it necessary to go over to offensive operations in the initial period of the war, feeling that combat operations on both sides during this period would have a delaying and defensive character. The belligerent nations would still be carrying out preparatory measures: mobilization, deployment of forces, and so forth. But in contrast to the French military leaders, Sikorskiy assumed that "strategic waiting cannot continue after all the forces are mobilized and their concentration is completed."[16] The enemy, he asserted, by exploiting any delay of an offensive, could so fortify the defensive front that it would have to be gnawed through, as in the war of 1914–1918, a situation that would be fraught with numerous complications, including revolutionary outbreaks For this reason, Sikorskiy argued, "in a future war, in all probability, there will be an effort to reduce its initial, exclusively defensive period in order to go over as rapidly as possible to a decisive offensive and accelerate operations of decisive importance. A defense, even one relying on modern permanent fortifications, cannot continue too long."[17] The Polish war plan was organized along Sikorskiy's views.

Thus, neither France, England, the U.S., nor particularly Poland, in working out the plans of a future war, sought to seize the strategic initiative at its

start. They proposed to limit themselves during this period to the conduct of purely static warfare in the theaters of operations.

5. Theories of Naval Warfare

On the eve of World War II the principal sea powers were England, the U.S., and Japan, among whom there was an intense struggle for supremacy on the world's oceans.

English naval doctrine was based on the theory of sea supremacy formulated in the past century by the English admiral Colomb. To achieve sea supremacy it was considered necessary to defeat the enemy's line naval forces in a general engagement and to establish a strict blockade of the enemy fleet.

The English admiralty and naval theorists advocated concentrating their main naval forces in the Atlantic, for they considered fascist Germany to be their major naval enemy. According to their war plan, in the event of an outbreak of armed conflict in Europe, the English navy was prepared to protect and fortify its sea lines of communications in the Atlantic, to destroy or seal off the German fleet, and to interdict the sea communications of Germany with the outside world. Only a small part of their naval forces was to be assigned to the Pacific before the defeat of Germany, and in the event of war with Japan, was to go over temporarily to a strategic defense.

In naval strategy the English government adhered to its traditional policy of "letting someone else's forces do the fighting." It tried to entrust the chief role in defending its Far Eastern possessions to the U.S. England made available its main naval base in the Pacific, Singapore, for basing the U.S. Pacific Fleet. The English armed forces were merely to give aid to the U.S. navy in holding England's Far Eastern possessions.

U.S. naval doctrine was in many ways similar to the English. It was based on the idea of winning sea supremacy. Because of its geographic position, the U.S. did not fear invasion of its territory by foreign troops. At the same time, the expansionist aspirations of U.S. ruling circles pushed the nation into the greatest possible development of its navy, which, as was felt in the U.S., was the country's first line of defense, its basic weapon in war, and its ultimate resource in international policy.[18]

The official U.S. views on waging war at sea were based on the theory of sea power formulated at the end of the nineteenth century by the American admiral Mahan. The leading principles of the Mahan theory were the creation of superiority in naval forces over a probable enemy before the start of operations followed by a surprise attack against the enemy. The joint chiefs of staff assumed that in the event of war the U.S. would not be able to take a direct part in it

for a long time. It would use this period to conceal the buildup of its naval forces to make a decisive surprise attack against the enemy at the necessary time on a previously selected axis, or, in other words, to defeat the enemy in one general engagement at sea.

Looking at the prospects of a future war with Japan, American military specialists felt that land armies in this war would play a secondary role. "Land operations between us and Japan will mostly consist in defending our possessions and seizing the enemy's under the cover of the navy; the latter operations will be possible only after the preliminary naval operations to clear the sea of enemy ships."[19]

Thus, on the eve of World War II, the naval doctrines of England and the U.S. recognized the battleship as the decisive force in the struggle to win sea supremacy, while the chief method for attaining victory over a naval foe was to defeat him in a general engagement. The English and American naval theories in fact overlooked the appearance of such a powerful branch of arms as carrier-based aviation. In truth, in England and the U.S. aircraft carriers were built during the prewar years, but their role in future naval engagements was underestimated.

Before the war most of the military theorists and leaders in England and the U.S. also underestimated the role of the submarine fleet in a future war. The high effectiveness of submarine operations on sea lines of communications during World War I did not attract the necessary attention of English and American naval specialists. As a result, not only the submarine fleet but also the antisubmarine defenses of England and the U.S. were not properly developed.

For a long time—until the start of 1941—the naval strategy of imperialist Japan was of a defensive character, since the advantage in naval forces was on the side of Japan's enemies. However, the concept of a strategic defense did not conform to the aggressive political goals of the Japanese ruling circles: to secure for themselves a monopolistic right to dominance in Southeast Asia and the countries of the South Seas. The Japanese political and military leaders were fully aware that to gain possession of this right, Japan would sooner or later be forced to enter a mortal encounter with its American and English competitors. There was a continuous naval arms race between Japan and its enemies.

By early 1941 serious changes had taken place in the views of the Japanese political and military leadership under the influence of the successes of fascist German forces in Europe, and because of such factors as the diversion of the English and American fleets into the Atlantic and the growth of Japan's own economic capabilities. All of this made possible an acceleration in the construction of the fleet. The strategic concept designed for conducting solely defensive operations gave way to an active, offensive naval strategy.

In forming these new views the Japanese command considered that a probable future armed conflict would be a long and stubborn war of enormous scale. Japan realized that it would have to fight simultaneously against the naval forces of three strong sea powers, England, the U.S., and Holland. In the estimate of Japanese military leaders, the U.S. was the number one enemy. In an extended war, the Japanese militarists reasoned, the outcome for Japan would be favorable only if the Japanese army and navy could be sufficiently supplied with strategic raw materials, and in particular, oil. The Japanese ruling circles concluded that Japan should preempt its enemies in starting the war, and, after seizing the strategic initiative, occupy the mineral-rich regions of Southeast Asia and the South Seas as quickly as possible.

As set forth by Admiral Yamamoto, the central idea of Japan's new offensive naval strategy consisted in attacking the U.S. Pacific Fleet in Pearl Harbor with a powerful surprise attack by carrier fleet forces in order to destroy or damage it to such an extent that it would be unable to recover for at least 3 or 4 months. According to the assumptions of the Japanese military leadership, once the main obstacle in their path, the U.S. fleet, was eliminated, such a period would be sufficient to capture the countries of Southeast Asia and the South Seas with blitzkrieg operations.

Thus, Japan's offensive naval strategy embodied much that had been elaborated by military thought in the West, especially in Germany, including the idea of blitzkrieg, surprise attack, the massing of forces on decisive axes, and the assigning of decisive importance to the first attack. These ideas underlay the plan for Japan's entry into the war.

Fascist Germany, although not belonging among the great sea powers, nevertheless was preparing seriously for war against maritime enemies. German views on methods of combat at sea were based on the theory of raider warfare, which had been developed between the two world wars by the German admirals Gross, Wegener, and Raeder. The goal of raider warfare, as it seemed to these admirals, consisted in causing heavy damage to the English merchant fleet, blockading the British Isles, and forcing England to surrender. Raider warfare was to begin with powerful surprise attacks against the English merchant fleet immediately after the start of military operations. The naval forces assigned to conduct it were to be deployed secretly in the seas and oceans before the start of the war. Large surface vessels, including battleships, cruisers, and auxiliary cruisers converted from merchant vessels, were to be the main component of these naval forces. These ships were to possess superiority in weapons and speed over similar enemy ships. Submarines were to be used in battle on lines of communications as an independent force.

It was intended that raider warfare would be carried out mercilessly and rapidly. It was felt that Germany should use all its naval forces as quickly as possible, since military success would come only if the attack on the enemy

lines of communications were carried out with complete ruthlessness. All protests by neutral powers would be rejected. The more ruthlessly German ships operated on lines of communications, the sooner they would achieve results and the sooner the war would end.

Italy, as a maritime nation at the center of the Mediterranean basin, aspired to hold a dominant position in it and turn the Mediterranean Sea into an "Italian lake." Within its economic capabilities, it developed a navy. However, the basing of the fleets of Italy's main competitors, France and England, in the Mediterranean did not allow the Italian government to create a navy that could enter into open combat with its opponents with any hope of success. The Italian navy was basically developed along the lines of building light, high-speed ships capable of making swift attacks on enemy ships and, if necessary, quickly escaping pursuit. From its entry into war, the Italian navy avoided decisive clashes with the Anglo–French naval forces, but on 11 November 1941, it was dealt a crushing defeat in the port of Taranto and after that played no substantial role in the war until Italy's surrender.

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The leading capitalist nations thus entered World War II with different military theories, strategic concepts, and doctrines of war.

Some of the military theories, for example, the theories of an independent air war and of mechanized or tank wars, were clearly a result of utopian thinking and were disproven by reality, although they did have a certain influence on the formation of the military doctrines and strategic concepts of a number of nations. Other military theories, including the theories of total war and blitzkrieg that emerged in the aggressive nations, overemphasized the importance of new means and methods of conducting warfare. These theories were of decisive importance for the formation of military doctrines in the aggressive nations. They were unscientific and ultimately failed in practical application. A third group of military theories, born in the capitalist nations opposing the aggressive bloc, were limited by the obsolete military dogmas of World War I. They recommended a passive wait-and-see defensive strategy calculated to exhaust the enemy. The reality of military operations repudiated these theories as well, although some of their concepts existed for a long time.

The great diversity and the contradictory character of military doctrines and strategic views in the various capitalist nations that made up the opposing group were determined by the differences in their political aspirations, economic resources, and particular geographic locations. These interwoven specific features had a decisive influence on the policies of these nations and, through their policies, on their military theories, doctrines, and strategies as well.

Despite the great flaws in the military theories, doctrines, and strategic concepts prevalent in different capitalist nations, the period between the two world wars represented a new stage in the development of a system of measures for preparing to enter into war and for unleashing and conducting war. The onset of this stage was determined in advance by the extensive growth of industry, the rapid development of science and technology, and the resulting swift progress in military weaponry.

Analysis of economic, sociopolitical, and military factors led the bourgeois leaders to the conclusion that a future war would be fiercer and more destructive than the last war and that nations unleashing a war or forced to enter into war because of certain circumstances would have to make use of their entire economic potential to achieve their political goals and would have to place large, well-equipped armies on the battlefields. None of them doubted that maximum mobilization of all of a nation's material and spiritual resources would be required to achieve victory in such a war.

The political and military leaders of the main capitalist nations derived two diametrically opposed conclusions from this estimation of the character of a future war.

Leaders of the nations that had considerable military and economic potential proceeded from the assumption that, despite the employment of such new means of warfare as aviation and tanks, a future war would inevitably be a drawn-out affair, since it would be waged by coalitions; that dozens of nations, large and small, would be pulled into it; and that it would unfold over tremendous areas of the globe. As a rule, however, these leaders underestimated the increased role of the initial period of war and the tremendous importance of the first surprise massed attacks by aviation and armored forces at the start of war. At the same time, they overestimated the possibilities of a static defense, relying on a system of obstacles and fortified zones. Preparation of these nations and their armed forces for war was thus calculated to thwart the enemy's offensive plans at the start of a war and to make it one of static warfare. It was assumed that maximum mobilization of all of a nation's forces would occur after the war was in progress, most likely during its last stage, when favorable conditions would have been created to make a decisive attack against an exhausted enemy. This is why most of the capitalist nations entering the war against fascist Germany and militarist Japan were late with the strategic deployment of their armed forces and finished their deployment during the difficult defensive engagements of the war's initial period.

Leaders of the aggressive nations (Germany, Japan, and Italy), whose military and economic potential was not as great as the combined potential of their enemies, did not count on achieving victory in a drawn-out war and based the organizational development of their armed forces and the methods for their combat employment on theories of total war and blitzkrieg, in which the initial period

was given the decisive role. The strategy called for maximum mobilization of all of a nation's forces at the start of war.

The strategic calculations of fascist Germany and the other advocates of blitzkrieg warfare were based on the use of a number of factors to achieve victory. Important among them were the following: the political splintering of one's potential enemies, the dual aim being to exclude the possibility of war on two fronts at the same time and to ensure a situation in which one's enemies could be destroyed one by one; the timely and concealed preparation to attack and preempt the enemy in strategic deployment in order to make a surprise first attack; the concentration of the maximum possible number of men and quantity of equipment in the first strategic echelon in order to achieve total superiority over the enemy at the start of war; the massed employment of men and equipment designated for initial operations, primarily aviation and tanks, in order to create absolute superiority over the enemy on decisive axes; the conduct of initial operations with maximum effort, at high rates, and at great depth in order to quickly defeat the enemy's covering armies and to thwart the mobilization and strategic deployment of the enemy's armed forces; and the subjection of the nation under attack to decisive defeat before it could make use of its war potential.

Thus, before the start of World War II the military and political leaders of the two opposing coalitions of imperialist nations, while appraising the character of a future war in approximately the same manner, had different views on the process of entering into war and on its initial period. Nations in the fascist bloc attached decisive importance to the initial period, carrying out such steps as mobilization, concentration, and strategic deployment of their forces in peacetime so that, after making a surprise attack against the enemy, they would be able to defeat its main forces during the first operations, thus determining the course and outcome of the war in their favor. Despite certain differences in their views on military theory, the political and military officials of the opposing coalition regarded the initial period of a future war as a time to conduct static or fluid defensive combat operations to cover the mobilization, concentration, and deployment of their forces.

When the war broke out, not only the forces, but also, figuratively speaking, the military theories, doctrines, and strategic concepts of the opposing sides entered into fierce clashes. As had happended before, this war proved much different and far more complex than the creators of those theories, doctrines, and concepts had imagined. Once again, however, it confirmed the force and vitality of the long-existing tendency to preempt an enemy in the conduct of preparatory measures, to undertake military operations at the start of a war, and to shift decisive engagements to that period.

Notes

1. J. Stalin, *Sochineniya* [Works], XII, 248. [Hereafter cited as Stalin—U.S. Ed.]
2. Ibid., XIII, 292.
3. See *Mirovaya voyna v tsifrakh* [The World War in Figures] (Moscow: Voyenizdat, 1934), p. 100.
4. See P. N. Rubtsov, *Sovremennyye vooruzhennyye sily i ikh organizatsiya. Kapitalisticheskiye strany* [Modern Armed Forces and Their Organization in the Capitalist Countries] (Moscow: Izdatel'stvo AGSH RKKA, 1938), pp. 120–121.
5. J. Fuller, *Tanki v velikoy voyne 1914–1918 gg.* [Tanks in the Great War 1914–1918] (Moscow: Izdatel'stvo Vysshego voyennogo redaktsionnogo soveta, 1923), p. 6.
6. Ibid., pp. 254–255.
7. E. Ludendorff, "Vedeniye total'noy voyny," *Voyennyy zarubezhnik* ["Waging Total War," Foreign Military Journal], 1936, No. 4, p. 0.
8. Ibid., p. 2.
9. De Gaulle, I, 34.
10. See F. Kuhlmann, *Strategiya* [Strategy] (Moscow: Voyenizdat, 1939), p. 461.
11. De Gaulle, I, 37.
12. Ibid., p. 35.
13. M. Matloff and E. Snell, *Strategicheskoye planirovaniye v koalitsionnoy voyne 1941–1942 gg.* [Strategic Planning for Coalition Warfare 1941–1942] (Moscow: Izdatel'stvo inostrannoy literatury, 1955), p. 117. [Hereafter cited as Matloff and Snell—U.S. Ed.]
14. Ibid., p. 27.
15. *New York Times*, 24 June 1941.
16. V. Sikorskiy, *Budushchaya voyna* [Future Warfare] (Moscow: Voyenizdat, 1936), p. 240.
17. Ibid.
18. See Denlinger and Gary, *Voyna na Tikhom okeane* [War in the Pacific] (Moscow: Voyenno-morskoye izdatel'stvo, 1939), p. 17.
19. Ibid., pp. 145–146.

Chapter 3. The Organizational Development of the Soviet Armed Forces and the Elaboration of Views in the USSR on the Character of Future War and Its Initial Period

The organizational development of the armed forces and the formation and development of military science in the Soviet Union took place in a complicated international and domestic situation. Encircled by capitalism, the USSR faced the constant threat of attack by imperialist aggressors. "... We are surrounded by people, classes, and governments," said V. I. Lenin, "that openly express great hatred for us. It should never be forgotten that we are always just a hair's breadth away from some sort of invasion."[1] This circumstance forced the Communist Party and the Soviet government, in addition to the attention they devoted to the sociopolitical restructuring of society, to display daily concern about maintaining the nation and its armed forces in readiness to repel an invasion by the imperialists.

Because of the tremendous effort exerted by the Communist Party and the Soviet people, the prewar five year plans saw the creation of the necessary material and technological conditions for increasing the nation's defensive might, for fundamentally reorganizing the armed forces, and for equipping them with advanced combat equipment and weapons.

Along with the growth of the Soviet nation's economic strength and defense capability, the balance of power between socialism and capitalism changed, as did views on the character and methods of armed defense of the socialist state.

V. I. Lenin's extremely rich legacy of military theory was and continues to be a vital source for the development of Soviet military science.

On the basis of a profound and thorough analysis of historical experience and an appraisal of the probable character of future military confrontations between the socialist state and the capitalist world, V. I. Lenin worked out the proletarian state's military program, developed his teachings on the defense of the socialist Fatherland, laid the foundations for Soviet military science, and drew up principles for the organizational development of the Soviet Armed Forces. V. I. Lenin thus armed the party and military cadres with the essential methodological

arsenal of knowledge to scientifically forecast the character of future wars and the methods of conducting them, primarily the wars that would be fought by the proletarian state.

While emphasizing that "we have been defenders since 25 October 1917," V. I. Lenin also pointed out that the working class, as the historically ascending class, would inevitably also be the class opposing the bourgeoisie. Both its political and military strategies would thus be offensive.

V. I. Lenin taught us to take a creative and flexible approach in accomplishing the various military and political tasks facing the state, always taking into account the specific situation and the actual correlation of the opposing forces. Acknowledging the validity of defense and retreat in military affairs, he emphasized, "... He who has learned how to advance but not how to retreat in certain difficult situations will not emerge victorious from a war. There have been no wars in history that have begun and ended with a continuous victorious offensive; or at most, they have only occurred as exceptions."[2]

V. I. Lenin pointed out the need to carefully study the history and experience of past wars, to adopt everything of value created by bourgeois military science, and to make skillful use of and improve on its achievements. He wrote, "Everyone will agree that it is imprudent or even criminal of an army not to prepare itself to use all types of weapons and all methods and means of warfare that the enemy has or may have."[3]

The Leninist legacy of military theory became the foundation of Soviet military science. The organizational development of the Soviet Armed Forces was based on it.

1. Specific Features of the Organizational Development of the Soviet Armed Forces

V. I. Lenin was the source of inspiration and the organizer of the Workers' and Peasants' Red Army and Navy, which, under his direct leadership, passed through their first tests in combat in the fire of the Civil War and foreign intervention. V. I. Lenin formulated the basic sociopolitical and organizational principles of Soviet military development.

The Red Army was created as the weapon of the dictatorship of the proletariat, as an army of workers and peasants that would defend the gains of the Great October Socialist Revolution against the encroachments of domestic counterrevolution and foreign military intervention. Its organization was based on a close unity with all the people and was in the spirit of proletarian internationalism. The indoctrination of army personnel with an awareness of their great responsibility to the peoples of the Soviet Union and to the working class and workers of all nations for defending the world's first worker-peasant state, and the

readiness of army personnel at any moment to go to the aid of their class brothers abroad, was always an inseparable part of the organizational development of the Soviet Armed Forces.

The Red Army was organized as a professional army. The temporary deviation from this principle caused by economic considerations did not alter the general trend in military organizational development toward a regular, professional army based on universal military conscription.* The Soviet Armed Forces were organized on the principle of strict centralization, unity of command, and iron military discipline.

The underlying foundation in the organizational development of the Soviet Armed Forces is the principle of total leadership of the armed forces by the Communist Party. This was clearly formulated in December 1918 in the RKP(b)† Central Committee decree "On the Policy of the War Department." This document stated that "the policy of the war department . . . is carried out on the precise basis of the general directives issued by the party in the name of its Central Committee and under its immediate control."[4]

During the first years after the end of the Civil War, when the war-devastated national economy was being rebuilt, the organizational development of the armed forces rested on a narrowed military-economic base. During those years, our army and navy still lagged far behind those of the developed capitalist nations in military technology. This situation could be altered only by speeding up the development of heavy industry, the major foundation for general and military machine building. The Communist Party policy of industrializing the nation and collectivizing agriculture, reflected in the first (1929–1932) and second (1933–1938) five year plans, made it possible to transform our nation in a historically short time from an agrarian one into an industrial-agrarian one, and to strengthen its defensive might. In accord with general trends in the development of military affairs, the Communist Party laid special stress on rapid progress in the aviation, tank, and engine-building industries. Under assignment of the AUCP(b) Central Committee, aviation designers developed and industry began mass production of new types of bombers (SB) and fighters (I-15, I-16) that, in performance, were equal to the best foreign models. The armored forces also developed rapidly. In 1933 the half-track BT tank and the tracked T-26 tank entered service. In the same year the T-28 medium tank (three-turret) and the T-35 heavy tank (five-turret) were developed. From the principal tank types, special-purpose types were developed, including bridgelaying, amphibious, flamethrower, and so on. This helped to increase the ground forces' fighting strength and battlefield mobility and maneuverability.

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*From 1924 through 1939 there was a mixed, territorial-professional system in the USSR. Author's note.

†[*RKP(b)—Rossiyskaya Kommunisticheskaya partiya (bol'shevikov)* 'Russian Communist Party (of Bolsheviks)'—U.S. Ed.]

Great advances were also made in the development of artillery weapons. All existing artillery was modernized, the number of howitzers was greatly increased, large- and small-caliber artillery was created, and antiaircraft and antitank weapons went into production and were soon being delivered. By the eve of the Great Patriotic War the Red Army had received new artillery systems. The number of artillery pieces in the army increased from 17,000 on 1 January 1934 to 55,790 on 1 January 1939.[5] During these years the rate of fire of the main artillery systems doubled, and the range of heavy artillery increased as much as 20 km—an increase of 75 percent.

Small arms underwent automation. The weight of these weapons was reduced, the design was simplified, and the rate of fire was increased.

The navy was also strengthened. While during the years of the 1st Five Year Plan the main emphasis had been on the construction of light naval vessels, in the 2nd Five Year Plan construction of large ships was begun in order to create a major oceangoing fleet. From 1930 through 1939 the navy's tonnage rose by 130 percent.[6]

Thus, during the years of the prewar five year plans, because of the heroic labor of the Soviet people and the farsighted policy of the Communist Party, the Soviet Armed Forces were rebuilt. The Red Army and Navy were transformed from a technologically backward armed force into a completely modern one capable of reliably protecting the world's first socialist state.

In the prewar five year plans there were major changes in the system of manning the armed forces. The Red Army and Navy moved from a mixed territorial-professional system to a manning system based on the principle of a single professional cadre. This reorganization was caused by two main circumstances. First, because of the growing threat of war and the intensified development of massive regular armies in the main capitalist nations, and above all in fascist Germany, the mixed territorial-professional system could not provide reliable defense for the Soviet state. Only a regular professional army outfitted with first-rate military equipment and composed of well-trained personnel could successfully oppose the probable enemies. Second, while the army was being equipped with as much new military equipment and armament as possible, the old territorial-professional system could not provide its ever-changing personnel with an adequate mastery of this equipment during brief courses. The task of teaching personnel to master the new military equipment could be solved only by an army manned with a single professional cadre and during a relatively extended period of active service.

The danger of war caused a great increase in the size of the army. Over the five years from 1933 through 1938 the army grew from 855,000 men to 1,513,400.[7]

In the Soviet Union's final prewar years the Soviet Armed Forces were being organized and developed while the fighting in World War II had already begun in other nations. After the defeat of Poland and France the threat of imperialist aggression against the USSR rose sharply. This made necessary urgent measures to immediately prepare the country and the Armed Forces for the approaching war. A specific feature of military development during these years was the concealed mobilization and deployment of the armed forces. New rifle, tank, mechanized, and air divisions were being formed rapidly. Besides the 9 mechanized corps created in 1940, at the start of 1941 another 20 mechanized corps were formed.[8] Formations and units of the High Command Reserve were created, and the airborne forces and National Air Defense Forces were strengthened. The size of the Soviet Armed Forces by 1 January 1941 had risen to 4,207,000 men.[9] The last 6 months before the start of the war were directly taken up with the concealed strategic deployment of the troops, which was to be the final stage of preparations to repel aggression.

At the same time there was a further equipping and reequipping of the army and navy with new military equipment and weapons. During these years aviation designers developed new types of aircraft (the Yak-1, MiG-3, LaGG-3, Il-2, and Pe-2) on a level with the best models of aviation technology. The designers of Soviet tanks created the KV heavy tank and the T-34 medium tank, which was unsurpassed in performance. There were new artillery weapons, including a 76mm battalion gun, 37mm and 85mm antiaircraft guns, a 210mm mortar, and a 305mm howitzer. During these same years Soviet rocket artillery was born.

The technological reconstruction of the Soviet Armed Forces was continued at a great pace and on an unprecedented scale.

However, history left the Soviet Union too little time to complete the planned program of rearming the army and navy while taking advantage of the experience and lessons already learned at the start of World War II. By the time of the treacherous attack by fascist Germany against the USSR it had been possible to outfit the Soviet Armed Forces only partially with the new types of military equipment and weapons. Before the start of the war only a few new models of aircraft had been received by formations and units in border districts. In the National Air Defense Forces the rearming of the fighter units with new high-speed fighters had not been completed, nor had the antiaircraft artillery received a full complement of 85mm guns. Radar equipment had just begun to enter service among the troops. There were only 1,475 new tanks (T-34 and KV) in the border military districts.[10] Most of the tanks on hand were of obsolete design.[11] The rifle formations, artillery, and other units of special forces had a limited amount of transport equipment. This sharply reduced their ability to maneuver. The troops experienced an acute shortage of advanced communications equipment, including radios, high-frequency telephone equipment, telephone and telegraph sets, underground and field cable, and so forth. The gigantic task of

rearming the Armed Forces with new technology was carried out during the Great Patriotic War.

2. Military Theories in the 1920s on the Probable Character of the Entry of Nations Into War

The talented Soviet military leader and statesman M. V. Frunze was one of the first in V. I. Lenin's lifetime to work productively on a scientific forecasting of the probable character of a future war and the problems of preparing the nation and armed forces for it. M. V. Frunze's articles and speeches on a unified military doctrine, on the ways and means to develop the Red Army, on the front and rear in a future war, and on Marxist-Leninist methodology were a major contribution to the development of Soviet military doctrine and military theory.

Analyzing World War I and considering the trends in the development of military affairs, M. V. Frunze pointed out that achieving the goals of a war under modern conditions had become much more complicated than before. Modern armies had colossal vitality. Even the complete defeat of enemy armies during one stage or another of a war would not provide ultimate victory if the defeated units had an economically and morally strong home front behind them. For this reason, in the clash of first-rate armies in a future war, none of the sides would be able to achieve the goals of war in a single attack. The war would become an extended and fierce contest in which all the political and economic foundations of a nation would be tested. "In expressing this in the language of strategy," wrote M. V. Frunze, "this means a transition from a strategy of swift, decisive attacks to a strategy of attrition."[12] But, he noted, this in no way meant that it would be necessary to completely abandon the strategy of swift attacks, particularly since this strategy had not been given up by the bourgeois nations. And precisely because the duration of a future war would depend greatly on morale and on political and economic factors, the advantages of morale in a class war would be on the side of the Soviet state. ". . . The stronger the aggravation of class contradictions in the enemy camp, the greater the chances for success and the greater the advantage of precisely this strategy," that of the swift attack.[13]

However, the Soviet government, M. V. Frunze asserted, could not rely solely on such a strategy. Since in a future war there would inevitably be a clash of two opposite social systems and the USSR would oppose the entire capitalist world alone, the struggle under any conditions would be a long one.[14]

It was essential, M. V. Frunze went on to note, to consider another feature of a future war. In it, the role of the rear would increase greatly, and at the same time the distinction between the front and the rear would be obliterated. "The transformation of aviation into a decisive branch of arms, the improvement in chemical weapons, the possible use of infectious microbes, and so

forth—all of this, in essence, upsets the very notion of the 'front' and 'rear' in the old meaning of these words."[15] The front, said M. V. Frunze, had ceased to be a genuine barrier blocking an enemy's access to a country's interior. He thus concluded that under the new conditions the Soviet state would be confronted by very complicated tasks that would require different methods of preparing the country for defense.

At the same time as M. V. Frunze, and after his death, scores of Soviet specialists, theorists, and practical workers in military affairs were engaged in elaborating the problems of a future war and the methods of waging it. All of them, taking into consideration in one way or another the effects of technological progress on military affairs and the general development of views on military theory, converged on the notion that a future war would become a decisive clash between large masses of troops equipped with an enormous amount of new military equipment: tanks, aircraft, automatic infantry and artillery weapons, and so forth. The new combat equipment would give combat operations an unprecedented rapidity, an enormous scope and depth, and a highly fluid character. Such a view on the character of a future war quite naturally required that special attention be paid to its initial period, for, as many military specialists assumed, the initial period would "embody" all the features of the future war.

One of the first Soviet military writers to study the problems of the initial period of a future war was A. A. Svechin. In studying the initial operations of World War I, he noted their difference from the so-called main operations (general engagements) characteristic of nineteenth century wars. The initial operations of World War I were characterized by increased complexity, duration, and great scope. Each operation was a whole set of battles and engagements, and so required a different grouping and deployment of forces than the general engagement had at one time required.

Up to the end of the nineteenth century, A. A. Svechin noted, an operation could be clearly divided into two parts: the maneuver, which was aimed at positioning forces in the most advantageous location by the time of the decisive clash (the "preparatory operation," in the terminology of Leyer, including the deployment and concentration of the troops); and the engagement itself (the "main operation"). "At present," he wrote, "we are abandoning the division of operations into main and preparatory."[16] He justified this abandonment because, as World War I had shown, operational deployment was not an independent maneuver, but an essential element of any operation.

Previously, mobilization too had been incorporated in the "preparatory operation," since it was a one-time phenomenon linked to preparations for the general engagement between the main forces. World War I showed that the character of mobilization had changed. It had become permanent mobilization carried out stage by stage over an extended period and was no longer directly linked to the first operations. In place of the term "preparatory operation," A. A. Svechin

introduced into usage two new concepts: the "premobilization period," which included the preparatory measures carried out before the declaration of war and the start of general mobilization; and the "special period of the war," which extended from its declaration to the start of major operations, when the general mobilization, concentration, and deployment of the armed forces for the first major operations would take place. A. A. Svechin called this special period the initial period of war.

In abandoning the old terminology and introducing new concepts, A. A. Svechin took a positive step forward. But he was still strongly influenced by old views on military theory and for this reason did not detect the new phenomena in the character of the initial period that had already made headway in the armed conflicts of the last decades. In his mind the initial period remained as before the period of preparing for the main operations, and included, in essence, all the measures that were previously incorporated in the "preparatory operation." A. A. Svechin felt that at this time, as before, individual battles and engagements would develop, but he did not foresee the possibility that major combat operations would take place during the initial period.

The prominent Soviet military figure B. M. Shaposhnikov devoted great attention to the problems of the entry of nations into war. In his work *The Brain of the Army* he showed the dependence of mobilization on political and strategic considerations, viewing it as a military phenomenon. In his opinion mobilization was directly linked to operational-strategic war plans. In World War I, B. M. Shaposhnikov noted, the belligerents intended to conduct the war according to the principles of a knockout strategy. Such a strategy, "to achieve a quick, decisive success, required swift preparation of the largest number of combat forces possible, their rapid concentration (that is, the completion of mobilization measures—Ed.), and their almost simultaneous engagement."[17] B. M. Shaposhnikov felt that the extreme dependence of mobilization on political and strategic calculations would "disclose itself" on the eve of a future war. Of course, he stated, the next war would be no shorter and less intense than the preceding one, and during the war governments would have to repeatedly resort to additional mobilizations. Nevertheless, mobilization carried out before the war would make the front echelon of the army strong enough to avoid being defeated in the initial operations.

In drawing this conclusion B. M. Shaposhnikov proceeded on the assumption that the mobilization on the brink of World War I was in fact a declaration of war. For this reason a nation that had decided on mobilization should be fully aware that in doing so it was following the path to war. An awareness of this fact and of the complexity of carrying out mobilization when large armies were being deployed, noted B. M. Shaposhnikov, forced nations even before World War I to set aside a special, preparatory, or, as it came to be called, premobilization, period, during which they sought to carry out the maximum number of mobilization measures (for example, in converting industry), but in a concealed

manner and without yet calling up inductees into the army. And on the eve of a future war, the author asserted, we would encounter the same premobilization period, but in this instance such a period would start much sooner, particularly in economic mobilization. However, it must be expected that both sides would try to reduce the time of the premobilization period and would move on to actual mobilization of men and equipment. "In any event," noted B. M. Shaposhnikov, "we will see that the steady buildup and early preparations for mobilization throughout a nation will be on a much greater scale than in 1914."[18]

B. M. Shaposhnikov clearly saw the trend in the developed nations to shift their mobilization measures beyond the pale of the war itself, or to put it more precisely, to carry them out while still in the prewar period. He clearly understood what was behind this trend: the desire of a nation to preempt its enemy in deploying its main forces. He asserted that even before a formal declaration of war, border conflicts could break out. ". . . In our times," the author noted, "a border violation begins neither with a declaration of war, nor with a declaration of mobilization, but takes place much earlier because of the activities of diversionary detachments. The nations may be in an *actual* war before its formal declaration and even before the mobilization of their armed forces. Mobilization, possibly, will take place during hostile operations along the border, when the diplomats will no longer need to turn to the general staff for information to make a formal declaration of war."[19]

B. M. Shaposhnikov thus disclosed two main trends in the preparations of nations to enter into war: the desire to carry out the maximum possible number of preparatory measures in the premobilization period, and the desire of the adversaries to enter into war before its formal declaration.

While A. A. Svechin and B. M. Shaposhnikov focused chief attention on disclosing the preparations of nations to enter into war, another well-known military figure, V. K. Triandafillov, widely examined the problems of conducting the initial operations themselves. One of his works, published in 1929, was titled *Modern Army Operations*. This work is noteworthy because it thoroughly analyzed the engagements of the initial period of a future war. In the foreword to the work, the author wrote, ". . . Judgments on the operations of a war's later periods cannot be as categorical as judgments on the forms and content of the operational art of its initial period."[20]

V. K. Triandafillov thoroughly analyzed the vast material that described the state of and prospects for the development of military equipment and weapons in the major capitalist nations. He disclosed the changes that had taken place in the views of military theorists on methods of military operations and the character of initial operations in a future war under the influence of more advanced military technology.

The author noted that by the end of the 1920s the size of the peacetime armies in all the developed countries was relatively small. In a sudden outbreak of war, each of them, encountering the need to rapidly deploy armed forces numbering in the many millions, would be put in a very difficult situation. But, V. K. Triandafillov noted, it would be a mistake to think that a future war would be started with engagements between peacetime armies. "As a whole series of postwar political conflicts has already shown," wrote V. K. Triandafillov, "one will merely have to get a whiff of military complications and the size of the peacetime armies will begin to move upward in leaps and bounds: without any particular noise the reservists will be called up and the number of authorized personnel will increase sharply."[21] From these facts, the author concluded that by the start of war, the belligerents would have under arms large forces that could enter into border clashes without waiting for a general mobilization.

Looking at past wars and seeing clearly the developing trends in military affairs, V. K. Triandafillov stood firmly on the side of those military researchers who favored making deep destructive attacks against an enemy from the start of a war. He understood well the difficulties that the young Soviet state would encounter if the imperialists were to organize a new armed invasion against it: the Red Army of those years was short on the means to neutralize an enemy and to support infantry in battle, it lacked motor transport, and so forth. These difficulties were temporary, and they certainly had to be considered, but they were no reason to abandon the search for a dependable assessment of the character of a war's initial period. It would be an irreparable mistake, said V. K. Triandafillov, to let existing difficulties in equipping the army cause it to fall into a sort of "operational opportunism," refusing to make active and deep attacks at the start of military operations and advocating tactics of inertia combined with brief forays. Deep and destructive initial attacks, in the author's opinion, were a demand of the time. They could quite rapidly knock entire government organs out of operation. These attacks would be the most dependable means to rapidly exhaust the human and material resources of the enemy and to create favorable conditions for sociopolitical disturbances in the enemy country. "The correct paths for the development of operational art," wrote V. K. Triandafillov, "should lead to the **full** use of every opportunity to inflict quickly and unerringly the greatest possible number of defeats on the enemy with the most damaging attacks possible."[22]

V. K. Triandafillov's work *Modern Army Operations* somewhat summed up the first stage in the work by Soviet military theorists to elaborate the problems of a future war and its initial period.

In this stage, in the 1920s, Soviet military theorists, including the prominent naval specialists K. I. Dushenov, A. M. Yakimychev, M. A. Petrov, I. M. Lurdi, and I. S. Isakov, were also concerned with the problems of using naval forces in a future war and in its initial period. At the time, the so-called minor war theory had spread in naval circles. According to this theory, it was assumed

that, in a war, brief rapid attacks would be made against the enemy by the main forces of the fleet; these forces would be closely coordinated with one another and with the ground forces committed to battle on maritime axes. Submarines, aviation, torpedo boats, and coastal artillery were considered to be the main forces of the fleet. The naval forces were to operate without moving great distances away from their bases. The minor war theory provided for the conduct of offensive and defensive operations. As one of its authors, Professor M. A. Petrov, said, a minor war was not only a defense in the pure form, but also an offense; this kind of war was both, and presupposed the conduct of battles and engagements at sea in accord with the enemy's operations, "our own missions," and the opportunities that presented themselves.[23]

The minor war theory was worked out according to our navy's available forces, which at the time were very limited. They as yet were unable to accomplish strategic missions independently, although they were capable of providing active help to the ground forces in conducting operations, including the initial ones.

The views on military theory in the 1920s on how nations would enter into war were formed during a difficult period in the history of the Soviet state, which had just emerged from the flames of the Civil War and had begun to rebuild the national economy. The economic potential of the nation was very limited. The composition and structure of the armed forces were far from the ideal of a future army, although this was even then quite clearly sketched out in concepts of military theory. This difficult period in the nation's history and in the organizational development of the army left its imprint on Soviet thinking about military theory. The debate on the content of a war at its start thus suffered from a certain abstractness. Nevertheless, it basically provided a correct assessment of a future war and its initial period, and quite accurately disclosed the general trends in military affairs, using in particular the experience gained in the development of bourgeois military theories. In this manner it provided correct guidance for military personnel in troop training and focused the attention of military specialists on a profound elaboration of the problems of conducting initial operations.

3. Development of Views in the 1930s on the Character of Future War and Its Initial Period

In the 1930s, which were characterized by an aggravation of the international situation and a growing arms race, there was a noticeably greater interest in the content of a future war and its initial period. In Soviet military literature, particularly in the journals *War and Revolution*, *Military Thought*, and *Foreign Military Journal*, and in the newspaper *Red Star*, there was a broad examination of World War I and the Civil War, as well as of new trends in the views of bourgeois military theorists on the preparations of nations to enter war.

A noteworthy feature of Soviet military theory in these years was its focus on working out the most complex problems of the initial period of a future war with an eye on the concrete demands for the armed defense of the socialist Fatherland. These problems were posed by life itself, by the massive motorization and mechanization of the armies, and by the greatly improved methods of mobilizing the armed forces. Special attention was devoted to preempting the enemy in strategic deployment. In formulating this problem, the focus was actually on extremely important new features in the content and character of the initial period of war. These features were a result of equipping the armies with new weapons, especially aviation and tanks.

The work of the prominent military specialist R. P. Eydeman demonstrated how acute was the problem of preemptive strategic deployment. In his *On the Character of the Initial Period of War*, published in 1931, he asserted that the initial period of a future war would be characterized by a fierce struggle on land and in the air for the right to deploy first. "The struggle for the right to deploy first is what, in our opinion, will characterize the initial stages of a future war."[24] The pace of the development of military clashes, he asserted, will be accelerated as never before. The scope itself of the clashes will also be much broader, and the first hours of the war will be marked by the start of air warfare.

Many military researchers were occupied with the problems of air warfare during the initial period. This was thoroughly examined in the well-known aviation theorist A. N. Lapchinskiy's work *The Air Force in Engagements and Operations*, published in 1932. In his opinion, during the initial period of war aviation had to accomplish three main missions: immediately after the declaration of war, make deep attacks against the enemy rear to thwart mobilization and concentration; participate in defending the country against enemy airborne chemical attacks and in covering the mobilization and concentration of friendly forces; and, finally, assist friendly forces on the battlefield. He felt that these missions could be carried out successfully only when air supremacy over the enemy had been established. The struggle for this supremacy would be started from the first days of the war. And all possible means would have to be employed in this struggle, including fighter, assault, and bomber aviation, antiaircraft artillery, small arms, and, to destroy airfields or interfere with their operations, long-range field artillery, cavalry and motorized units, and partisan groups. In the initial period of war A. N. Lapchinskiy assigned a special role to bomber aviation, the main mission of which, in his view, was to disrupt troop traffic toward concentration areas, thus disrupting the enemy's operational plans.[25]

A landmark in the development of views on the initial period of war were the propositions of a 1933 report by Chief of Staff of the Red Army A. I. Yegorov to the USSR Revolutionary Military Council. These propositions, reflecting to a certain degree the official view of the military leadership, very clearly posed and settled major problems in preparing the nation to enter war and conduct its initial operations.

The basic notion from which A. I. Yegorov started in analyzing the initial period of war was the assertion that in peacetime the belligerents would try as early and as quickly as possible, using a concealed mobilization, to assemble the most mobile and maneuverable forces and equipment (aviation, mechanized units, and cavalry formations) in order to invade enemy territory at the necessary time and thwart the mobilization and concentration of enemy armies in border regions. In A. I. Yegorov's opinion the concentration of forces would be strongly influenced by two main factors: the quantity and quality of the aviation on each side and the presence of mechanized formations combining great striking power and firepower with high mobility.

The question arose how each of these factors would influence the concentration of the Red Army's formations. In answering it, A. I. Yegorov pointed out that enemy ground forces, on encountering the major water obstacles and fortified areas on the western border of the USSR, would not have a substantial influence on the rail movements and concentration of Soviet forces. Aviation would represent the greatest danger. Air operations and paratrooper groups could actively impede troop movements to a depth of 600 to 800 km.[26]

In A. I. Yegorov's opinion, military operations at the start of the war would be marked by broad scope and high intensity. The air force would assume the most important role. All available combat aviation (including naval and organic) would be used to win air supremacy, disorganize the enemy rear, thwart enemy mobilization and concentration, and destroy enemy naval forces. In carrying out these missions, heavy aviation would remain under the control of the high command for action against the enemy operational rear, while all remaining aviation would be shifted to support the ground forces.

As for large mechanized units (in A. I. Yegorov's report they were called invasion groups), they would develop an offensive on enemy territory in cooperation with cavalry formations and aviation supported during the first days of the border engagements by infantry units. These groups would attempt to destroy covering units and thwart mobilization in border regions to force the enemy to shift its deployment lines to the rear. They would also capture and hold operationally important regions in the rear. "However," A. I. Yegorov pointed out, "it must be considered that the invasion groups will be capable of causing only a series of crises or dealing a series of defeats to the covering armies, but will not be able to terminate the war or inflict a decisive defeat . . . on the main forces. This is the mission of the subsequent period of operations, when the operational concentration will be ended."[27]

The essence of A. I. Yegorov's concept on the problems of the initial period of war thus centered on the notion that nations preparing for war in peacetime would assemble in border regions secretly mobilized armies (invasion groups) that would undertake broad offensive operations. In addition, aviation would perform a special role. Combat operations would be started in the air, on the

ground, and at sea. The mobilization and deployment of the main forces would be completed under the cover of these operations.

The work *Border Operations*, written in the mid-1930s by the prominent military leader and theorist M. N. Tukhachevskiy, was marked by a broad view of a future war and a specific analysis of a number of key problems in its initial period.[28]

In this work the author set as his goal a disclosure of the specific features of initial operations, having most closely tied them to the growth of air force and mechanized units. M. N. Tukhachevskiy proceeded from the assumption that the old, customary views on the possibility of unobstructed movements of mass armies by railroads directly to border areas no longer conformed to existing conditions. Border areas, he noted, had become too vulnerable to enemy aviation and mechanized forces, since, considering aircraft performance, the actual depth of effect of each side's air forces at the start of a war would be at least 250 km. In this area aviation would bomb airfields, attack rail networks, and drop airborne formations to thwart mobilization, blow up railroads and highways, and isolate individual troop garrisons. Air attacks in combination with operations by mechanized forces, and, when possible, by cavalry and rifle troops mounted on vehicles, would create a situation that would thwart or extremely complicate the planned mobilization and concentration not only of the main forces but also of the covering troops in the border zone. Under these conditions mobilization and strategic concentration would be possible only with a new arrangement for the border engagement. Now, M. N. Tukhachevskiy asserted, "the border engagement will be fought not by the main forces of the army, as happened in previous wars, but by special units, that is, by a special forward army stationed in the border zone."[29]

Developing the idea of a special forward army to cover the mobilization and deployment of the main forces, he gave special consideration to the composition of this army, the depth of its position from the border, and the character of its operations.

In M. N. Tukhachevskiy's opinion, the army would be a strong, highly mechanized formation and, in addition to ground forces, would also include large air forces not more than 150 to 200 km from the border. The mechanized corps of this army, even in peacetime, would be kept close to authorized levels and stationed 50 to 70 km from the border so as to be able to cross it on the first day of mobilization. The cavalry, also at wartime levels, would have to consolidate the success of the mechanized formations and would be positioned in direct proximity to the border. Infantry units mounted on vehicles would also be moved there, their mission being to exploit and reinforce the success of the mechanized forces and cavalry. The composition of the forward army would include self-propelled artillery. During the initial operations, airborne forces would coordinate closely with the army.[30]

In the author's opinion, immediately after a declaration of war or during the first day of mobilization, the forward armies would begin broad offensive operations with an attack by bomber and assault aviation on enemy airfields and landing strips and on railroad and highway junctions in a zone extending 150 to 200 km from the border. At the same time, paratroopers would be dropped in the enemy rear to a depth of up to 250 km to thwart mobilization and to sabotage railroads and highways. Invasion by mobile forces would begin simultaneously with the start of operations by air and airborne forces.

If neither side could find effective measures to resist the enemy invasion, then the movement of troops to the border by rail would be stopped and the armies mobilized in the interior of the nation would have to be unloaded from their trains at an enormous distance from one another—up to 500 km on each side of the border. In the author's estimate, the main forces of the adversaries, advancing to the border during forward battles and skirmishes with airborne and independent detachments of enemy mobile forces, and rebuilding destroyed bridges and communication lines along the way, would be able to engage each other not earlier than 2 weeks after the start of the war.

In that event, if one side succeeded in impeding the invasion of the enemy, defeating it with air forces, by the time the mobilized armies were unloaded from their trains, the sides would be up to 250 km apart. Then the clash of the main forces would take place approximately a week later, but on the territory of the nation that had suffered most from the first attacks.

It was M. N. Tukhachevskiy's general conclusion that a border operation well executed by a forward army would be the best guarantee of the prompt concentration of the main forces and their commitment to a decisive engagement. But, in preparing for a war, the author pointed out, one must not underestimate the enemy. "It is essential not to console ourselves that our possible enemies will be slow in reorganizing in keeping with new demands. The enemy can reorganize suddenly and unexpectedly. It is better for us to preempt our enemies. It is better to make fewer mistakes than to learn from mistakes."[31]

In the history of Soviet military thought in the 1930s no prominent military theorists will be encountered who in one way or another did not take up in their works the problems of the initial period of a future war. These problems inevitably evoked increased interest among specialists in military affairs.

Interesting ideas on problems of mobilization, strategic deployment, and the conduct of initial operations were raised in the work *The Evolution of Operational Art* by the military theorist G. S. Isserson. He felt that, in conducting the mobilization and deployment of mass armies, no nation at the moment of the start of military operations would be able to concentrate all its troops simultaneously on the battlefields. For this reason, he asserted, aviation, as the most mobile part of the armed forces, would begin combat operations. "The

ground enemies will not have exchanged a single round when this branch of arms, in the first hours after the onset of a state of war, begins its operations along the longest trajectory."[32] The motorized formations and mechanized cavalry, which make up the base of the covering armies, will enter into battle after aviation. At this time the main mass of the frontline army under deployment will still be in the grips of the complicated process of concentration. When this mass is also engaged, the outlines of the second strategic echelon of mobilized forces will take shape in the nation's interior, followed by the third, and so forth. Ultimately, because of "permanent mobilization," defeat will come to the side that cannot withstand the mobilization strain and runs out of reserves, its economy exhausted.

Another military theorist, Ye. A. Shilovskiy, in the article "The Initial Period of War," published in 1933, wrote that instead of individual clashes in a comparatively narrow border area, as was observed in the war of 1914–1918, in a future war a fierce battle "will develop during the first hours of military operations . . . along the front, in depth, and in the air."[33] The same idea was developed by another military affairs specialist, M. Tikhonov, in an article titled "The Initial Period of a Modern War." Military confrontations in this period, the article said, which previously had taken the form of border clashes and had not had a great impact on even the mobilization of the enemy army, were now becoming of primary importance. "Not only the mobilization of the enemy army, not only the course of the first operations, but even the outcome of the entire war can depend to a certain degree on the combat operations in a war's initial period."[34]

Most of the military figures and theorists in the 1930s agreed that by the term initial period of war one must understand the brief segment from the declaration of war to the start of the first major operations by the main forces of both sides. Also, it was thought that in a future war this period would be full of intense combat between the air forces and previously deployed invasion armies (or covering armies) in their attempt to seize the strategic initiative, support the deployment of their main forces, and thwart the deployment of the enemy's main forces. Achieving the immediate strategic goals at the start of the war was inseparably linked to the mass use of aviation and mechanized forces. Primary importance was attached to air operations to win air supremacy. The widespread ideas on the creation of well-equipped invasion armies and covering armies in peacetime made it possible to conclude that a large part of the preparatory measures for troop concentration and deployment would be shifted from the initial period of war to the prewar period, and that, with the outbreak of war, the belligerents would in fact merely complete the deployment of the main forces. The time required to engage the main forces in a decisive engagement would thus be greatly reduced, which meant that the duration of the war's initial period would be shortened.

4. Formation and Further Development of Views on the Initial Period of War in the Final Prewar Years

From the autumn of 1939 the views of Soviet military researchers on the preparations of nations to enter into war were taking shape under the immediate impact of the combat experience already being gained in World War II.

The German-Polish war was the first to confirm the correctness of the positions of Soviet military theory on the initial period of war. Although this was a war of unequal opponents, since the economic and military superiority of fascist Germany over Poland was overwhelming, its experience was instructive.

This experience attracted the attention of many Soviet military theorists. Among them was Professor S. N. Krasil'nikov of the General Staff Academy, In the work *The Offensive Army Operation*, he formulated a number of propositions on the initial period of war and its character, taking consideration of the German-Polish campaign.

In his military theoretical constructs, he proceeded from the inevitability of new military clashes between the major nations and the likelihood that the USSR could be drawn into them. Using the German-Polish war, S. N. Krasil'nikov pointed out that the initial period of war was no longer a preparatory stage of war, as it had been previously.[35] Now the prewar stage had become the preparatory stage. During this stage, which could be more or less extended, measures that had previously made up the basic content of the initial period of war were carried out. Now the initial period of war would be, as a rule, the period of the first intensive operations by the aviation, naval, and ground forces ready to engage in combat operations by the start of war. The initial period directly and gradually would develop into the period of main operations, and the distinction between these periods would be obliterated.

Preempting the enemy in the concentration and deployment of the army's main forces, S. N. Krasil'nikov noted, had now assumed much greater strategic importance than before 1914. At that time a delay in the concentration and deployment of forces could be offset to a certain degree by the loss of a small amount of territory—by shifting the front for deployment and concentration back into the interior—since each 20 to 25 km of such withdrawal provided a gain in time of at least a day. Now this withdrawal no longer provided an opportunity for unobstructed troop deployment and concentration. Motorized armies, as war experience had shown, were capable of crossing such enormous expanses in such a short period that vast territories would be lost immediately without a fight. Consequently, to provide the army with an opportunity to concentrate and deploy, it was not possible to delay an engagement at the start of war by moving back the front for deployment and concentration. It was essential to be ready from the first minutes of war to fight the enemy in the air, on land,

and at sea for the right to seize the operational-strategic initiative. The entire initial period of war would be full of fierce struggle by the belligerents for this right.

In S. N. Krasil'nikov's views on the initial period of war, the new circumstances introduced by the German-Polish war were, on the whole, conceived correctly. However, these views showed the author's doubt about the possibility in the near future of starting a war immediately with the main forces already fully mobilized and deployed. At the same time, the German-Polish war, and particularly the armed attack by fascist Germany on France, showed that the Hitlerite leadership was unleashing combat operations with troops that were mobilized, concentrated, and already deployed for the invasion.

In December 1940 there was a conference of the Red Army leadership, and very great attention was devoted to studying World War II, which had already started. At this conference problems in conducting the initial operations in the European military campaigns were fully raised.

Conference participants noted the treachery of the Hitlerite leadership, which discarded all standards of international law to achieve surprise in an armed attack. Attention was drawn to the power of the initial attacks made against the enemy by the fascist German army. Thus, the troop commander of the Kiev Special Military District, General G. K. Zhukov, stressed in his report that the defeat of Holland, Belgium, the English expeditionary force, and France was characterized primarily by the surprise and the power of the attack.

The conference participants also noted the fascist German army's characteristic use of massed aviation and armored units in the initial operations. As General G. K. Zhukov said at this conference, the aviation and armored forces had essentially terrorized the entire Polish army and nation with their swift, deep attacks.

A participant at the meeting, the chief of the Main Air Defense Directorate of the Red Army, Lieutenant General D. T. Kozlov, focused in his speech on the methods of winning air supremacy that the Hitlerite command had employed during the first days of its armed invasion of Poland and France. Fascist German aviation, he noted, made massed attacks against the enemy's airfields, and in France primarily against those where the most modern aircraft were stationed. Using such methods, fascist German aviation won air supremacy in the first days of the war, providing superiority not only in numbers but also in the quality of the aircraft.

The conference showed that the Red Army leadership was fully aware of the character of combat operations in the initial period of modern war and recognized its specific features, such as the conduct of operations by fascist Germany against Poland and France using armed forces mobilized in peacetime. Most of the conference participants, despite certain skeptical voices, firmly adhered to a view

of the initial period of war as that interval when operations employing new weapons assume a decisive character and the seizure of the strategic initiative plays the most important role. During this period powerful retaliatory attacks against the enemy at the start of the war, in combination with the extensive use of aviation and tanks, would be of decisive importance.

These views underlay Soviet military doctrine and served as a guide for carrying out specific measures in preparing the country for the future war. In particular, under their direct influence the forces of the western border districts were greatly strengthened during the last prewar years.

However, this did not mean that Soviet theory on the initial period of a future war was free from shortcomings.

Although proceeding from the position that wars were no longer declared, but started suddenly, Soviet military thought assumed that in the war being prepared against the USSR the belligerents would still need a certain amount of time to deploy and concentrate their main forces.

In practice, evidently, the specific features noted by theoretical thought in the new methods of entering into war, as employed by fascist Germany, had not been taken into account. It was assumed that these methods could provide the expected effect only in wars fought by strong nations against weak ones, but that in an armed struggle against strong, vigilant nations with equal or even greater military and economic potential, the aggressor would not be able to start operations suddenly and engage his main forces all at once. Marshal of the Soviet Union G. K. Zhukov, who at the start of the Great Patriotic War was the chief of the General Staff, noted:

"In reworking the operational plans in the spring of 1941 . . . the new methods of waging war in the initial period were not, in practice, fully taken into consideration. The People's Commissariat of Defense and the General Staff felt that a war between such major powers as Germany and the USSR would start as previously outlined: the major forces would engage several days after the border engagements. In concentration and deployment periods, fascist Germany was under the same conditions as we were. But in fact both the forces and the conditions were far from equal."[36]

The orientation of the theory of the initial period of war merely toward the conduct of powerful retaliatory offensive attacks obscured the study of problems in conducting a strategic defense and the study of some other aspects of strategy and operational art. For example, it can be mentioned that the idea of the retaliatory attack, which lay at the basis of the strategic plan of the initial operations, had not been fully elaborated. These flaws in military theory were corrected during the war itself.

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The organizational development of the Soviet Armed Forces and the formation in our country of views on a future war and its initial period were based on the unshakable methodological foundations of Marxist-Leninist theory and on V. I. Lenin's teachings on defense of the socialist Fatherland.

From the start the Red Army and Navy were developed as a new type of armed forces, an instrument of the dictatorship of the proletariat, called to defend the achievements of the socialist revolution. These forces were created in close unity with the people and were indoctrinated in the spirit of proletarian internationalism.

Total leadership by the Communist Party was the foundation of the organizational development of the Soviet Armed Forces. As a result, they became a powerful modern military force in a historically brief period, a force provided with advanced military equipment and weapons and possessing a fully developed military theory.

From the moment of its inception Soviet military thought was on the correct path in forecasting the character of a future war and its initial period, relying on a generalization of World War I and Civil War experience and taking into account the influence of technological progress on military affairs.

Soviet military theory correctly appraised the character of a future war and the specific features of its initial period. It was able to identify trends in the main capitalist nations' preparations to enter into war. However, these trends were not taken into full account in practice.

The progressive character of Soviet military theory and the great skill of commanders and staffs in leading the troops, which grew out of the fertile soil of that theory, were confirmed by the course and outcome of the Great Patriotic War.

Notes

1. Lenin, XLIV, 296.
2. Ibid., XLIV, 209.
3. Ibid., XLI, 81.
4. *KPSS o Vooruzhennykh Silakh Sovetskogo Soyuza. Sbornik dokumentov 1917-1958* [The CPSU on the USSR Armed Forces: A Collection of Documents 1917-1958] (Moscow: Gospolitizdat, 1958), p. 47. [Hereafter cited as *The CPSU on the USSR Armed Forces*—U.S. Ed.]
5. See *50 Let Vooruzhennykh Sil USSR* [50 Years of the USSR Armed Forces] (Moscow: Voyenizdat, 1968), p. 201. [Hereafter cited as *50 Years of the USSR Armed Forces*—U.S. Ed.]
6. Ibid., p. 206.

7. Ibid., p. 198.
8. Ibid., p. 236.
9. Ibid., p. 234.
10. Ibid., p. 252.
11. See *CPSU History*, V, Bk. 1, 144.
12. M. V. Frunze, *Izbrannyye proizvedeniya* [Selected Works], p. 254.
13. Ibid.
14. Ibid., p. 255.
15. Ibid.
16. A. Svechin, *Strategiya* [Strategy] (Moscow: Gosvoyenizdat, 1926), p. 296.
17. *Voprosy strategii i operativnogo iskusstva v sovetskikh voyennykh trudakh (1917-1940 gg.)* [Questions of Strategy and Operational Art in Soviet Military Works (1917-1940)] (Moscow: Voyenizdat, 1955), pp. 208-209. [Hereafter cited as *Strategy and Operational Art*—U.S. Ed.]
18. Ibid., p. 213.
19. Ibid., p. 215.
20. V. K. Triandafillov, *Kharakter operatsiy sovremennykh armiy* [Modern Army Operations] (Moscow: Voyenizdat, 1937), p. 13.
21. Ibid., p. 49.
22. Ibid., p. 203.
23. *Morskoy sbornik* [Naval Digest], 1928, No. 6, p. 17.
24. *Voyna i revolyutsiya* [War and Revolution], 1931, No. 8, p. 12. [Hereafter cited as *War and Revolution*—U.S. Ed.]
25. See *Strategy and Operational Art*, p. 636.
26. See A. I. Yegorov, "Taktika i operativnoye iskusstvo na novom etape" ["Tactics and Operational Art at the New Stage"], *Journal of Military History*, 1963, No. 10, p. 35.
27. Ibid.
28. See M. N. Tukhachevskiy, *Izbrannyye proizvedeniya* [Selected Works] (Moscow: Voyenizdat, 1964), II, 212-221.
29. Ibid., p. 217.
30. Ibid., pp. 218-219.
31. Ibid., p. 221.
32. G. S. Isserson, *Evolyutsiya operativnogo iskusstva* [The Evolution of Operational Art] (Moscow: Voyenizdat, 1937), p. 79.
33. *War and Revolution*, 1933, Nos. 9-10, p. 7.
34. Ibid., 1934, Nos. 3-4, p. 33.
35. See *Strategy and Operational Art*, pp. 487-488.
36. G. K. Zhukov, *Vospominaniya i razmyshleniya* [Recollections and Reflections] (Moscow: Izdatel'stvo APN, 1970), p. 216. [Hereafter cited as Zhukov—U.S. Ed.]

PART II: STRATEGIC PLANNING AND ARMED FORCES DEPLOYMENT ON THE EVE OF AND AT THE START OF WORLD WAR II

Chapter 4. The Military and Political Bases for Strategic Planning. The Goals and Plans of the Initial Campaigns and First Operations of the Capitalist Armies

In the final years before World War II the international situation was characterized, in part, by continued intensification of imperialism's conflicts in the capitalist world and by the desire of Germany, Italy, and Japan to use armed force to redraw the world map in their favor. There were also persistent attempts by international imperialist circles to create a united anti-Soviet front in order to direct the aggression to the east and ultimately to destroy or at least seriously weaken the USSR.

The political report of the AUCP(b) Central Committee to the 16th Party Congress pointed out that whenever capitalism's conflicts begin to intensify, the bourgeoisie turns its attention to the USSR, conceiving ways in which to resolve one or another of capitalism's conflicts or all of its conflicts at the expense of the USSR, whose very existence revolutionizes the working class and the colonial peoples.

Following an anti-Soviet course in their foreign policy, England, France, and the U.S. did everything possible to nudge fascist Germany and militarist Japan into an attack against the USSR. The western powers gave the fascist nations entire countries in exchange for a commitment to start a war against the Soviet Union.

The Munich agreement, entered into by the heads of the governments of England, France, Germany, and Italy (September 1938), was the culmination of the attempts by the ruling circles of the imperialist powers to create a united anti-Soviet front. Because of this agreement Czechoslovakia was turned over to fascist Germany to be torn apart. Exposing the anti-Soviet direction of the Munich agreement, the 18th AUCP(b) Congress pointed out that the Hitlerites

"had been given regions of Czechoslovakia as the price for their commitment to begin war against the Soviet Union."[1]

The imperialists' behind-the-scenes Munich deal represented a decisive step toward World War II.

A threatening situation was also developing in the Far East. Japanese militarists were conducting a war in China and had twice unleashed armed conflicts near the borders of the USSR and the Mongolian People's Republic (near Lake Khasan and the Khalkhin-Gol River). Although both times the Red Army repelled the Japanese provocateurs in a fitting manner, they did not cease their escalation of aggression in the Far East.

The unending efforts of the Soviet government to create a collective security system were thwarted by the western nations. Resorting to open and secret deals, the ruling circles in England and France, with the cooperation of the U.S., persistently attempted to make an agreement with the fascist bloc nations and to direct their aggression against the USSR.

The socialist nation was faced with the acute problem of preventing the international isolation of the USSR and the creation of a united anti-Soviet imperialist front. Because of the Soviet government's flexible and active policy, the designs of the imperialist ringleaders met with failure. With the signing of a nonaggression pact with Germany in August 1939 and a neutrality agreement with Japan in April 1941, the Soviet government wrecked plans designed to resolve the imperialist system's internal conflicts at the expense of the USSR.

Following the capitalist nations' failure to create a united front against the USSR, and after the great intensification of imperialism's conflicts, World War II started in the capitalist system: on 1 September 1939 fascist Germany attacked Poland. Betrayed by its allies, France and England, Poland was rapidly overcome. The western powers' calculations that fascist Germany would turn its weapons against the USSR after Poland's defeat were not borne out. Hitlerite Germany's aggressive aspirations were directed toward the west this time. Germany seized Norway, Denmark, Belgium, Holland, and Luxembourg in the spring of 1940, and defeated France in the summer of the same year. By the summer of 1941, after achieving rapid victories in the Balkan nations, fascist Germany had established its domination over most of the European nations.

Fascist Germany's leaders considered the war with the Soviet Union to be the decisive stage of the struggle for world supremacy. They hoped for an easy and quick victory. As is well known, however, these hopes were not destined to be realized. When Hitler's army attacked the USSR on 22 June 1941, the entire Soviet nation came forward to defend the socialist Fatherland.

World War II was expanded at the start of December 1941 when Japan attacked the U.S.

In January 1942, 26 nations, including the USSR, the U.S., and England, signed a declaration on combining military and economic resources to defeat the fascist bloc of nations. This act constituted the formation of an anti-Hitler coalition, which had been developing since the start of the war through efforts by the USSR, and signaled the final collapse of imperialist plans for the international isolation of our nation.

Participation by the U.S. and England in the anti-Hitler coalition resulted from the recognition by the ruling circles in those nations that without the USSR they would not be able to halt the continued aggression of Nazi Germany and its allies, and so protect their national interests. An important role was played by the powerful upsurge in the antifascist movement among the broad masses of the population in many nations, including England and the U.S., a development that the governments of those nations could not ignore.

Preparing for war, the general staffs of the main imperialist nations carefully worked out plans to conduct military operations against their probable enemies, devoting special attention to the planning of their initial campaigns and first strategic operations.

1. The Strategic Plans of Fascist Germany and Militarist Japan

Fascist Germany's Plans in the Campaigns in Poland and Western Europe

Fascist Germany's strategic plans rested on the expansionist aspirations of the German monopolies, which were pushing to establish world dominance. The policy of the Hitlerite leadership was in close keeping with these aspirations. In general terms, fascist Germany's military-political plan included the following:

1. Put the small European nations under German domination and create the necessary economic and strategic conditions for a war against Germany's chief enemies in Western Europe.

2. Defeat France and England, put the nations of Western Europe under German domination, and make the necessary preparations to attack the Soviet Union.

3. Defeat the Soviet Union and create the conditions for achieving world domination.

4. Form a German colonial empire by conquering Africa, the Near and Middle East, and other regions of the world.

The ringleaders of the fascist Reich felt that the Soviet Union was the main enemy standing in the way of the creation of the "Great German Empire." For this reason, both before World War II and at its start, the policy and strategy of fascist Germany served to create the economic, political, and military conditions for its defeat. This was expressed in the desire of fascist Germany to first capture the small European nations and defeat its age-old competitors, France and England, and then unleash aggression against the USSR.

The political and military leaders of fascist Germany, expressing the interests of the German monopolies, intended to take over the political and economic systems in the conquered nations and impose a so-called new order on the peoples of the world. They "planned" to deprive the conquered peoples of national sovereignty, eliminate the democratic victories of the workers, and turn some peoples into disenfranchised vassals and others into slaves of the "superior German race." This program of colonization and enslavement of sovereign nations showed the very essence of the infamous "new order."

The military and political leadership of fascist Germany took particular care in working out the Ost plan, the plan to enslave the Slavic peoples. This plan called for the extermination and Germanization of scores of millions of people living to the east of Germany as far as the Urals. In Poland, for example, the territory was to be "depopulated," moving more than 20 million (80 to 85 percent) of the Poles from their homeland and putting an end once and for all to the existence of the Polish nation.[2] One of the fascist ringleaders, Frank, in assuming the position of "governor general of the occupied Polish areas," declared: "From now on the political role of the Polish nation is ended. It is declared to be a labor force, and nothing more.... We will see to it that the very concept of Poland is erased once and for all. The Polish Republic will never be resurrected, nor any other Polish state."[3]

The military and political plans of fascist Germany, permeated through and through with an openly racist, fanatical ideology, were adventurist. The ultimate political goals of Hitler and his supporters expressed the desire to turn back social development. Moreover, the material and human resources of Germany were quite inferior to those of its enemies.

A distinguishing feature of the strategic plans of the German general staff was that, no matter what an enemy's strength and potential capabilities, the main role in achieving victory in a war (or campaign) was accorded to the initial strategic operations. During these operations the German command planned to achieve the complete defeat of the enemy or, at least, the creation of the decisive conditions for completing the enemy's defeat in one rapid campaign.

The methods outlined by the German general staff to achieve victory against the enemy rested on the ideas of blitzkreig warfare and the "strategic Cannae" and had as their source the theoretical heritage of the bastions of German

militarism, the elder von Moltke and Schlieffen. From the start of the war (or campaign), the main emphasis was put on the encirclement and destruction of the enemy.

The first attempt to employ blitzkrieg warfare and the "strategic Cannae" was made by fascist Germany at the start of World War II in the war against Poland.

The campaign in Poland was conceived as a strategic operation to encircle and destroy the Polish army (the Weiss plan). The Hitlerite leadership took three principal factors into account: (a) the configuration of the German-Polish border, which was advantageous for the German armed forces and made possible, even in the regions where the offensive began, the occupation of an enveloping position in relation to a large part of Polish territory; (b) Germany's predominant military and economic superiority over Poland; (c) the certainty that Poland's western allies would not come to its aid and that Germany would be able, without fearing for its rear, to concentrate an overwhelming part of its armed forces against Poland.

To conduct the operation, two army groups were created. Army Group South (the 14th, 10th, and 8th field armies, the 15th, 16th, and 22nd tank and 14th army motorized corps, and the 4th Air Force) was to make the main attack, advancing from Silesia toward Czestochowa and Warsaw. Army Group North (the 3rd and 4th field armies, the 19th Tank Corps, and the 1st Air Force) had the mission of driving toward Warsaw from the north and northwest. Part of the forces from these groups was to make auxiliary attacks: the 14th Army from Slovakia and the 3rd Army from East Prussia moved in the general direction of Brest and aimed at deep envelopment of the Polish forces and action against their attempts to break out of the interior ring of encirclement.

In its final version the Hitlerite plan for the campaign in Western Europe (the Gelb plan), which had been reworked several times, set as the immediate strategic goal to make a deep attack across the Ardennes, to cut the strategic front into two parts, and to encircle and destroy the allied forces fighting on the front's northern wing. Subsequently, from the line of the Aisne, Oise, and Somme rivers, a new strategic operation was to be carried out to put France out of the war.

To accomplish this plan, three army groups were to be fielded: A, B, and C. These groups (taking into consideration the strategic reserves) consisted of 136 divisions, including 10 tank and 7 motorized. Altogether, 3.3 million men and 2,580 tanks were to conduct the first strategic operation. To support the ground forces, two air forces with 3,824 aircraft were allocated.[4]

The main attack across the Ardennes was to be made by Army Group A. On reaching the English Channel and after protecting itself with a part of its forces

on the line of the Somme River to the south, Army Group A had the mission of advancing to the north and northeast. Together with the forces of Army Group B, it was to complete the encirclement and destruction of the main allied forces.

Army Group B was given the mission of rapidly taking Holland, breaking through the Belgian border fortifications, and throwing the enemy back to the line of Antwerp and Namur.

Army Group C was to defend the Siegfried Line from Luxembourg to the Swiss border, and later go over to the offensive through the Vosges.

Thus, under the Gelb plan, the first strategic operation pursued the decisive goal of destroying the main allied forces on the northern wing of the front. In achieving this goal an important place was given to the divisive attack. This attack was to crush the entire strategic front and isolate the most combat-capable part of the allied armed forces. The encirclement and destruction of the isolated troop grouping were to be carried out in the final stage of the operation by a double envelopment.

The calculation of the Hitlerite command to achieve a quick victory in the campaign in the west was based on making use of a number of factors: the passive wait-and-see strategy of the western powers; the major mistakes in the strategic deployment of the allied armies; the surprise of the invasion and the paralyzing psychological effect of massed attacks by aviation and major armored formations against allied forces.

In striving so that the course and outcome of the military campaigns would be determined ahead of time by the conduct of the initial offensive operations, the fascist German command devoted special attention to the maximum concentration of men and equipment in the decisive theaters of operations and strategic axes. The crushing might of the first attacks was achieved by this (see table 1).

The Hitlerite command assigned a leading role in achieving the goals of the initial operations to the air force and tank forces.

In the plans for the initial operations in Poland and Western Europe the most important mission of the air force was to win air supremacy. Among the immediate air missions were thwarting the mobilization movements, disrupting the strategic deployment of enemy armed forces, and attacking the reserves being brought up from the interior. Part of the air force was given the mission to provide direct support to the ground forces, particularly those accompanying tank and motorized formations, from the start of combat operations. As one operation or another developed according to plan, this mission became the main one for aviation. The combat activity of the ground forces was supported by assigning one air force with 1,000 to 2,000 aircraft to each army group. To

Table 1. Concentration of German Ground Forces by the Start of the Campaigns in Poland and Western Europe.[5]

Time	Total divisions in fascist Germany	Distribution of divisions					
		On main strategic front		For covering strategic rear on side of probable new enemies		In interior regions of Germany and in occupied territories	
		No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
By the start of the attack on Poland	103	57*	53	31**	30	15	15
By the start of war in Western Europe	157	136	86.5	10***	6.5	11	7

*57 divisions according to the plan. Fifty-three were deployed by the start of the war, 62 took part in the war.

**These divisions were on the borders with Holland, Belgium, and France. From 3 through 10 September 1939 the number of divisions on Germany's western borders increased to 43.

***These divisions were along the Soviet border. From the autumn of 1940 their number began to increase rapidly.

conduct the campaign in Poland, 2,000 aircraft were used, and in Western Europe, about 3,800.

In both campaigns the tank formations were the core of the assault grouping of the ground forces. The fascist German command, before the start of each campaign, took energetic measures to add the greatest number of tank forces possible to its strategic groupings (see table 2).

The fascist German command concentrated the main mass of its mobile formations on the axes of the main attacks. So, in the Polish campaign most of the tanks were concentrated in the offensive area of the 10th Army (Army Group

Table 2. Number of Tank and Motorized Divisions by the Start of the Campaigns in Poland and Western Europe.

Time	Tank divisions			Motorized divisions		
	Total in Germany	Assigned for campaign		Total in Germany	Assigned for campaign	
		No.	%		No.	%
By the start of the attack on Poland	7	6	86	5	5	100
By the start of war in Western Europe	10	10	100	7	7	100

South), which was to make the main attack. In the invasion of France, tank formations were first combined in a tank group of five tank and three motorized divisions. This group included 1,250 tanks, 862 armored cars, and 41,140 other vehicles. This large formation was included as part of Army Group A, which was to advance in the decisive sector of the front. The tank group was the chief means of carrying out a broad and rapid maneuver when making a divisive attack. To support and cover the group from the air, sizeable aviation and air defense forces were assigned (the tank group was to coordinate with the 3rd Air Force and the 1st Air Defense Corps).

In planning the initial operations, the fascist German command attached great importance to the airborne forces. They were to play a special role in the defeat of Holland. Here the terrain conditions impeded a rapid offensive and the attainment of surprise in the first attack without the use of airborne forces. It was decided that they would play a big part in the invasion, carrying out, in particular, such an important mission as disorganizing the top political and military leadership. Airborne forces were also to be used to capture the Liege fortified area, which blocked the path into central Belgium.

The German navy was to defend the nation's coast against the operations of enemy naval forces and aviation, protect Germany's sea lines of communications, disrupt the enemy's sea lines of communications, and support friendly ground forces operating on the coast. The navy was also to be used to intimidate the neutral Scandinavian and Baltic nations.[6]

These general navy missions were made specific according to the naval theaters of operations. Thus, in the Baltic Sea the German navy was to control the Baltic straits, protect its lines of communications, destroy or isolate the Polish navy, and support forces advancing on maritime axes.

The warfare against the English merchant fleet was entrusted to major surface vessels and submarines. To support the surface forces, special supply transports were to be deployed (before the war) in a number of regions in the Atlantic Ocean. Ocean raiders were to operate in areas separated by great distances. To avoid damage and early disablement, it was not recommended that these ships engage even weak enemy forces. To combat English shipping, a number of fast merchant transports were to be converted into auxiliary cruisers with powerful gun and torpedo armament, and these were to be camouflaged as merchant vessels.*

In planning naval operations, great importance was placed on submarine actions. One of the important missions entrusted to the submarine fleet was to disrupt merchant shipping in English coastal waters. The submarines were to wage an active struggle against the English merchant fleet where surface vessels

*Twenty-six auxiliary cruisers were to be used, but in fact only 12 were outfitted. From the spring of 1940 they began operating in the Atlantic, Indian, and Pacific oceans. Author's note

could not penetrate. It was planned that submarines would take up their assigned stations before war had been declared.

Aviation was to make attacks against enemy naval bases and ports.

An organic part of the plans for the initial operations was the use of the so-called fifth column—an organized system of espionage and sabotage in the territories of the probable enemies. Detachments were made up ahead of time and ordinarily consisted of representatives of the German national minorities, traitors, and specially dropped agents. These detachments were to carry out terrorist acts against industry, transport, and communications centers, and were to collect intelligence data and so forth.

Thus, in planning the invasion of one country or another, the fascist German command gave its armed forces the mission of dealing a decisive defeat to the enemy's strategic groupings in the initial operations. To achieve this goal, it sought to concentrate the maximum possible number of men and quantity of equipment, particularly aviation and tanks, on the axes of the main attacks. The principle of massing forces for the first attack was at the basis of all the strategic plans of the fascist German command. This principle made it possible for Germany to obtain a great numerical superiority over its enemies on the main axes. To cover the borders along which military operations were not planned, or for operations on secondary axes, the minimum number of ground formations and air forces was set aside.

Imperialist Japan's Strategic Planning for the Initial Operations in the Pacific

Militarist Japan, like fascist Germany, pursued in its foreign policy an openly aggressive course to seize foreign territories and repartition the world.

By the start of the war in the Pacific, Japan was one of the major colonial powers in the world. It had taken control of Korea, Manchuria, Taiwan, South Sakhalin, and the Kurile, Pescadore, Caroline, and Marshall Islands. Japan's aggressive operations expanded constantly. In 1937, continuing its war against China, Japan seized a large part of north and south China and Inner Mongolia. In the summer of 1941 the aggression of the Japanese militarists was extended to Indochina.

The basis of the expansionist drives of Japanese imperialism was the great-power idea of creating a "Great Japanese Empire" and establishing the dominance of the "superior Japanese race" in East and Southeast Asia.

The aggressive foreign policy of imperialist Japan was totally determined by the struggle of the Japanese monopolies to seize cheap sources of raw materials and markets for the rapidly developing economy. Having started later than the

other major nations on the path of capitalist development, when the world had already been divided between the major imperialist predators, Japan, with its limited domestic sources of raw materials and food, was directly dependent on foreign markets. It is enough to note that on the eve of World War II Japan imported 90 percent of its petroleum, from 50 to 75 percent of its metals, over one-half its raw cotton, and virtually all of its wool, rubber, and jute from territories under the control of the U.S., England, France, Holland, and other colonial powers.[7] For this reason the imperialist drives of the Japanese monopolies were aimed primarily at the South Seas, at Indochina, Malaya, and the Dutch East Indies, which were rich sources of food, petroleum, iron ore, tin, manganese, and bauxite.

The desire of the Japanese militarists to strengthen their positions in the Pacific and penetrate the South Seas led to an inevitable aggravation of imperialist contradictions between Japan and the U.S. A war between these nations had been maturing for many decades. "Before us," wrote V. I. Lenin in the 1920s, "is a growing conflict, a growing clash between America and Japan—for there is a stubborn struggle between Japan and America . . . over the Pacific Ocean and the possession of its coasts; and all the diplomatic, economic, and commercial history affecting the Pacific and its coasts fully and clearly demonstrates how this clash will grow and make war between America and Japan inevitable."[8]

Another direction of expansion by Japanese imperialism pointed toward the Soviet Union. The capture of the inestimable natural resources of the Soviet Far East and Siberia was an old dream of the Japanese imperialist bourgeoisie. However, its repeated attempts to profit at the expense of the USSR encountered a crushing rebuff from the Soviet people and ended with the defeat of the Japanese invaders. Nevertheless, the dream of seizing the Soviet Far East and Siberia never left the Japanese militarists.

In the summer of 1941 the Japanese militarists had finished working out their plan for war against the USSR. This plan, named *Kan Toku En* ("Special Maneuvers of the Kwantung Army"), assumed that the main attack would be made in the Maritime Province by the forces of the 1st Front. The troops of the 2nd Front were to cross the Amur River, cut the railroad, and capture the major cities in the Soviet Far East (Khabarovsk, Blagoveshchensk, and others). The start of the concentration of Japanese forces under the *Kan Toku En* plan was set for 20 July 1941.

The heroic resistance shown by our army to the fascist German forces in the summer of 1941 upset the plans of the Japanese militarists. In carefully following the course of military events on the Soviet-German Front, they could not help but note that their partner in the Anti-Comintern Pact, fascist Germany, had been caught up in a drawn-out war. The calculations of the Japanese general staff that with the start of fascist Germany's attack on the USSR, Soviet forces would begin to be moved from the Far East to the west also came to nothing.

Assessing the military and political situation that was taking shape, Japanese ruling circles estimated that it would be better to make the first attack on the possessions of the U.S., England, and Holland in the Pacific and South Seas, since the western powers in these regions did not have sufficient forces to resist a Japanese offensive. As for an invasion of the Soviet Union, the opinion of the Japanese government was that the most favorable moment for it would occur when the military and economic might of the USSR in the war against fascist Germany had been thoroughly undermined. According to the evidence of the former Japanese prime minister, General Tojo, Japan intended to enter the war against the USSR only when "as a result of the German attack, the military might of the USSR had been completely undermined, thus making Japan's mission of capturing the Soviet Far East as easy as possible."[9] At a meeting of the Japanese cabinet on 2 July 1941, the decision was made not to intervene yet in the war between Germany and the USSR, but at the same time to continue to carry out concealed preparations for war against the USSR so to be ready, in a situation favorable for Japan, "to solve the northern problem by force of arms."[10]

At a Japanese cabinet meeting on 1 December 1941 the decision was finally made to begin the war against the U.S., England, and Holland. On the same day, Imperial Headquarters set the date of the attack (the D-day would be 8 December, Tokyo time). In setting the D-day, Imperial Headquarters proceeded from the following considerations: first, it was assumed that in the spring of 1942 the balance of forces at sea would change in favor of the U.S. and any deferment of the D-day would be advantageous only for the allies; second, the best weather conditions (sea conditions) close to the Malayan coast would be during the first 10 days of December.

Deciding to go to war with the U.S. and England, the Japanese military and political leadership, of course, was aware that it was challenging the major world powers, whose military and economic capabilities were many times greater than the military and economic potential of Japan. But the Japanese leadership did not plan to defeat the United States of America and England, limiting itself to the more "humble" goal of seizing the colonial possessions of the U.S., England, and Holland in the Pacific and the South Seas. This would permit the Japanese militarists to wage a drawn-out war, which, they thought, the U.S. would not decide to do. The Japanese leaders assumed they would later be able to settle the conflict using various concessions and political maneuvering.

Imperialist Japan based its strategy on the same principles that were characteristic of the strategy of its partner, fascist Germany. The military and political leadership of Japan assigned the main role in achieving victory to the initial strategic operations. Considered indispensable for victory were a decisive massing of men and equipment for the first attack and the surprise of the attack itself.

By mid-August 1941 the command of the Japanese army and navy had worked out a general strategy, while staff organs had drawn up four versions of a plan for offensive combat operations. The first version called for the initial capture of the Dutch East Indies, followed by the Philippines and Malaya. According to the second, there was to be a consecutive advance of the Japanese armed forces from the Philippines across the islands of Borneo, Java, and Sumatra to the Malay Peninsula. The third planned an advance in the reverse order, from Malaya to the Philippines. Finally, the fourth version was designed for a simultaneous attack on the Philippines and Malaya, followed by the rapid seizure of the Dutch East Indies.[11] The fourth version of the plan, a simultaneous offensive on two axes, was given complete approval by the command of the Japanese army and navy after joint staff exercises in Tokyo in September 1941.

This plan called for the seizure of the strategic initiative by conducting surprise attacks in the first days of the war on various operational-strategic axes. During their operations the army and navy were to cooperate closely and seize their intended objectives quickly. The initial period of the war was to last about 5 months. The Japanese strategists considered that the actual military might of the U.S. and England in East Asia and in the southwestern Pacific was at that time insignificant. For this reason the Japanese command's plan came down to defeating the opposing allied forces during the initial operations and digging in firmly on the seized territories.

Achieving the goals of the initial strategic operations (in the initial period of the war) would, according to plan, be carried out in three stages.

In the first stage there was to be the capture of the Philippines, British Malaya, the Bismarck Archipelago, and the islands of Guam, Borneo, and Celebes.

In the second was the capture of the islands of Java and Sumatra.

In the third was the capture of Burma and of the Andaman and Nicobar Islands in the Bay of Bengal.

After the capture of these regions, a fortified line was to be created from the Kurile Islands and northern Japan across Wake Island, the Marshalls and Gilberts, the Bismarck Archipelago, New Guinea, Timor, Java, Sumatra, and the islands of the Bay of Bengal up to the border between India and Burma.[12]

To conduct the initial strategic operations, the Japanese command assigned major naval, land, and air forces.

Taking part in these operations were the main forces of the Japanese navy, including 10 battleships, 10 aircraft carriers, 36 heavy and light cruisers, 109 destroyers, 52 submarines, and about 50 picket ships, minesweepers, minelayers,

and gunboats. From the ground forces, 5 armies (the 14th, 15th, 16th, 23rd, and 25th) were assigned to the operations, for a total of approximately 12 divisions.

As for the air forces, 1,150 aircraft from army and land-based aviation were to take part in combat operations in the initial period.[13]

The largest number of army aviation aircraft were assigned for combat operations on the Malay Peninsula. Air operations were to begin at dawn on D-day. Surprise air attacks were planned against the main U.S., English, and Dutch airfields. After winning air supremacy, the aviation was to be shifted to direct support of the ground forces during the troop landings and other ground operations. While conducting operations, the air forces were to be rebased from Taiwan to the Philippines and from French Indochina to Malaya.

In the Japanese war plan, winning sea supremacy was fixed as one of the main strategic missions in the initial period. After pointed debates and a careful study of the various war plans, it was recognized that the most effective way to defeat the U.S. Pacific Fleet would be with a surprise massed air attack by carrier-based aviation on the first day of the war against the ships of the American navy at their main base, Pearl Harbor (in the Hawaiian Islands).

The plan for the Hawaiian operation worked out by the commander in chief of the Japanese combined fleet, Admiral Yamamoto, called for the creation of a powerful strike force of 6 carriers (360 aircraft), 2 battleships, 3 cruisers, and a fleet of destroyers. This force was to approach the Hawaiian Islands without detection to a distance of 200 miles north of the island of Oahu and attack the American ships at Pearl Harbor. The battleships and carriers were to be the main objectives of the attack by carrier-based aviation. It was anticipated that torpedoes would be used to hit the enemy ships. Bearing in mind Pearl Harbor's shallow harbor, the torpedoes were consequently outfitted with special stabilizers and were to be dropped from low altitudes (to prevent them from "diving"). At the same time, heavy bombs (up to 800 kg) were to be used in bombing from horizontal and dive runs. Fighter aircraft and part of the bombers were to destroy the American aircraft on the airfields and in the air.

The plan for the Hawaiian operation was tested out in fleet exercises, which showed that the attack by carrier-based aviation against Pearl Harbor was in fact feasible. Nevertheless, many felt that this plan was risky. On the day of the attack the U.S. Pacific Fleet might not be at the base. There was also a serious danger that the Japanese task force would be detected during the long approach to the Hawaiian Islands.

The key to the Hawaiian operation was the surprise of the attack. For this reason operational reconnaissance held a special place in the preparations for the attack on Pearl Harbor. The Hawaiian Islands became the object of systematic

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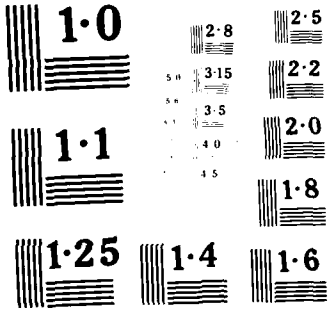
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reconnaissance by Japanese submarines. The Japanese consulate in Honolulu was widely used to collect intelligence data. The Japanese command regularly received information on the position of American ships—particularly battleships and carriers—at the Pearl Harbor base, on the presence of barrage balloons over the base, on the protection of the ships by antitorpedo nets, on the organization of patrols, and so forth.

Moving to unleash war in the Pacific, imperialist Japan thus carried out its strategic planning with recognition of the decisive importance of the initial operations. Like fascist Germany, imperialist Japan proceeded to work out its plans for military operations on the principle of massing its main forces and equipment on decisive axes and using surprise in the attack.

2. The Western Coalition of Powers' Strategic Planning for War and Its First Operations

The Plans for the Initial Campaigns in Europe

The principal factor determining the policy and strategy of the western powers before World War II and in its first stage was the openly anti-Soviet foreign policy of the ruling classes in England and France, which found specific expression in the desire to provoke a clash between Germany and the Soviet Union.

When fascist Germany suddenly attacked Poland, the ally of France and England, the governments of these countries in fact sacrificed Poland to their anit-Soviet policy. The notorious guarantees that these powers had made to Poland turned out to be pure bluff.* The governments of the western powers, despite the obligations they had assumed, did not intend to provide any help to Poland during the first days and weeks of the war. Concerning their junior partner, they proceeded from the position "that the fate of Poland will depend on the result of the war, and this in turn will be determined not by whether the allies can lessen the pressure on Poland at the start of the war, but by whether or not they will be able to defeat Germany ultimately. . . ."[14]

When the Hitlerite army invaded Poland, the French and English governments limited themselves to merely a formal declaration of war against fascist Germany.

*The military obligations of Poland's western allies in the event of German aggression, under a military protocol signed in Paris on 19 May 1939 by Chief of the French General Staff Gamelin and Polish Defense Minister Kasprzycki, amounted to the following:

1. Major objectives in Germany would immediately be subject to aerial bombing.
2. Three days after the declaration of mobilization in France a series of offensive operations with limited goals would be undertaken against the German forces in the west.
3. After the 15th day of mobilization, when a large part of the German army would be fighting in Poland, a broad offensive would be mounted by the main forces against Germany (see *Journal of Military History*, 1961, No. 12, pp. 37-38).

The passive wait-and-see defensive military doctrine of France conformed most appropriately to the interests of the French ruling circles. It was a unique smokescreen permitting the government to play a dual political game: on one hand, by being formally in a state of war against Germany, it could pay a certain tribute to the demands of world public opinion to stop the fascist aggressor; and, on the other, by idleness on the Western Front and by active anti-Soviet actions, it could demonstrate to Hitler its readiness to accede to the seizure of Poland and to support Germany's eastern policy.

The position of the French government was completely to the liking of conservative circles in the English bourgeoisie, which also had assumed a wait-and-see attitude toward Germany and had not lost hope of embroiling it in a clash with the USSR. The English government felt that England was not threatened by a direct invasion of its home soil by German armed forces because it was separated from the continent by the channel and had a powerful navy. For this reason, until Hitler's further intentions were clarified, the English government set itself the goal of continuing to apply pressure on Germany merely by setting up a sea blockade, disrupting German shipping, and isolating Germany from overseas sources of supply. To conduct military operations on the continent, the English government intended to employ a minimum of effort. England's European allies were to absorb the attack by the fascist German war machine. At the same time, the English exerted a great effort to strengthen allied relations with the U.S., feeling that a close military and political alliance with this country would strengthen England's positions in Europe and in those regions of the world where a threat had arisen to English colonial possessions.

After the Munich plot it became more and more apparent that the ringleaders of fascist Germany did not intend to pay the bill presented by the western powers. The hope of the creators of the Munich policy that the USSR and Germany would clash, at least during the immediate future, was not realized. Hitlerite aggression on the European continent continued to develop. In March 1939 fascist Germany swallowed up all of Czechoslovakia, and in the summer attacked Poland.

The aggressive foreign policy of fascist Germany created a genuine threat to the economic and political interests of England, France, and their allies. In the situation taking shape, the western powers were forced to take measures in the event of war with fascist Germany, to work out a general strategy, and, based on that strategy, to devise their own plans for war and its initial operations.

Based on the mutual military pledges of the western allies, the **Polish war plan** against fascist Germany, under the code name *Zakhud* ("West"), was drawn up as part of the general war plan of the entire coalition (Poland, France, and England). From a comparison of the military and economic potentials of Poland and Germany, the Polish government concluded that the country could not wage war against Germany with hope for success without direct military help from

the western allies, and above all France. The government was convinced that with the start of war Germany would throw all its might first against Poland, limiting itself merely to defensive operations on the Western Front, and that in the first weeks of the war Poland should be prepared for a maximum effort by its forces in order to stand alone until the entry of the allied armed forces into battle.

On these premises the principal method of conducting combat operations after the start of an invasion by fascist German forces was a strategic defense. The immediate strategic goal of the Polish armed forces consisted in defending the country's major economic regions, inflicting on the German armed forces as many casualties as possible and not allowing the enemy to rout the Polish army before the start of combat operations by the allies in the west.

To repel the German offensive, 39 infantry divisions (including 9 reserve), 11 cavalry brigades, and a tank brigade were to be employed. All of these forces were combined in 7 armies and several operations groups. The effective combat strength of the armies was weak. Each of the armies numbered from 2 to 7 infantry divisions. Moreover, each army had 1 or 2 cavalry brigades. The northwestern regions of the country were to be covered by 2 armies (Modlin and Pomorze), the western by 3 armies (Poznan, Lodz, and Prussy), and the southwestern by 2 armies (Krakow and Carpathian). Operating on these same axes were operations groups consisting of 1 or 2 infantry divisions and 1 or 2 cavalry brigades. The front of the defenses for the army formations varied from 100 to 300 km. It was anticipated that during the defense, under pressure from superior enemy forces, the Polish forces would have to retreat 110 to 240 km.

The Polish command knew that Germany would allocate major forces for the attack against Poland. According to Polish data, the enemy surpassed the Polish army in infantry by a factor of 1.5, in tanks by a factor of 15, in aviation by a factor of almost 4.5, and in artillery by a factor of almost 2. Naturally, on the axes of the main attacks Germany's superiority in men and equipment could be overwhelming. When it is considered that the numerical superiority of the German armed forces was supplemented by the higher quality of German military equipment, then one can appreciate the exceptionally difficult situation in which the Polish army found itself on the eve of the fascist German invasion.

According to the estimates of the Polish command, the Polish army could last no longer than a month in a one-on-one fight with fascist German forces. However, it was felt that this period would be completely sufficient to mobilize, deploy, and develop a decisive offensive by the armed forces of France and England. The diversion of the fascist German army's main forces at this time from the Polish Front to the west could make it possible for Poland to move from a strategic defense to a strategic offensive.

The strategic plans of England and France were worked out from previously coordinated military and political concepts of the governments and general staffs in both nations. These plans were based on the following premises:

1. The probable enemies of the Anglo-French coalition were the leading nations of the fascist bloc. Military operations would be started by Germany first, and then by Italy and Japan. The decisive events would take place in Western Europe.

2. The main mass of the ground forces in Europe would be fielded by France. England would use its main forces in the naval theaters of operations.

3. At the start of a war in Western Europe, France and England would concede the initiative in operations to their enemies. The main efforts of the allied armed forces would be concentrated on conducting a strategic defense to repel the enemy offense. In the other theaters of operations, for example, in North Africa, individual operations could be undertaken at this time. Broad offensive operations by the English and French armed forces in Western Europe would be possible only at a later stage of the war.

4. From the start of the war a set of measures would be carried out to undermine the enemy's economic potential; sea lines of communications would be defended.

5. Diplomatic opportunities would be widely used to obtain the active support of neutral countries, particularly of the United States, for the English and French efforts. One document said the following about the coordinated military and political plans of the English and French governments: "... We should be ready to repel a broad offensive against France or against Great Britain or simultaneously against both nations. For this reason, in the initial stage of war we must concentrate all our efforts on repelling such an offensive; consequently, during this period our strategy will generally be defensive.

"Nevertheless, Italy's operations in North Africa can give us the opportunity to carry out a number of counteroffensives in the initial stage of the war without detriment to the success of the defense in Europe....

"While restraining Germany and making decisive attacks against Italy, our subsequent policy should be aimed at the same time at increasing our forces to be able to undertake an offensive against Germany.

"During all these stages it will be essential to gradually undermine the ability of our enemies to resist by persistently applying economic pressure against them."[15]

From these general military and political concepts, each nation in the Anglo–French coalition worked out its own plan for the use of its armed forces in war.

In planning to repel the fascist German aggression, the French general staff proceeded on the assumption that if Germany did decide to attack France, it would make the main attack with the right flank of its ground forces through central Belgium (the Schlieffen plan). This view was based on the experience of World War I and on the deeply rooted conviction that central Belgium was France's most vulnerable strategic axis, since here the enemy could undertake broad maneuvers with major forces.

The possibility of an attack through Luxembourg and the southern regions of Belgium was excluded because of the seemingly limited operational capacity of this axis, which ran through the mountainous and forested area of the Ardennes and was inaccessible, particularly for tank and mechanized formations. As for the part of the Franco–German border from Luxembourg to Switzerland, where for many years a line of permanent border fortifications called the Maginot Line had been under construction, it was considered completely impassable for invasion armies.

The different versions of the plans for strategic deployment of the French army and the English expeditionary forces (it was assumed that England would shift an expeditionary corps to French territory) had one essential flaw: they were unable to completely carry out the central idea of the Anglo–French defensive strategy—the conduct of a static defense along the entire strategic front.

Although a defensive grouping of French forces had been created and deployed ahead of time to the south of Longwy (the northern boundary of the Maginot Line) and was ready to repel an offensive, the French and English forces deployed to the north of Longwy on the main axis along the Belgian border in fact occupied assembly regions. With the start of the German offensive they would have to move into Belgian and Dutch territory and from a marching formation quickly take up defensive lines that were insufficiently or completely unprepared with fieldworks.

This unusual digression from the idea of a static defense derived from the special relations that had developed between France and England, on one hand, and Belgium and Holland on the other. The governments of these small European countries, fearing by imprudent actions to provoke an invasion of their territory by German forces, held to a position of neutrality. At the same time they let England and France know that if Germany violated their neutrality, they would not refuse aid from their western neighbors. Thus considering Belgium and Holland to be their potential allies, the ruling circles in France and England deemed it advisable at the start of the war to shift the deployment

line of their main forces forward to the territory of these nations in order to coordinate joint efforts with the Belgian and Dutch armies to repel the German offensive.

Right up to the start of the war and the defeat of Poland, the Anglo–French command adhered to the plan of deploying allied forces known as Plan E. Under this plan the Schelde River was to be the deployment line. The apparent merits of Plan E were that, according to it, the allied forces could reach the line of the Schelde 24 hours after the start of military operations and, consequently, could take up the defensive in time to get ready to repel the German offensive. But considering that the Belgian and Dutch armies, with no more than 30 infantry and 2 cavalry divisions, were deployed along the Albert Canal and the Maas River, they were too far removed from the allied forces. In other words, the Belgian and Dutch divisions would be left to their own devices for a certain period. They faced defeat even before the approach of the allied armies.

After the defeat of Poland the allied command reexamined this plan. In mid-November 1939, some 2½ months after the start of the war, a new plan was approved to deploy the main forces—the so-called Plan D. Under this plan, at the moment of an invasion of Belgium by the fascist German army, the main mass of allied forces concentrated on the left wing of the French northeastern Front was to begin a major maneuver march (over a distance of 100 to 200 km) into the interior of Belgium to meet the enemy on the line of the Albert Canal and the Dyle River. In Plan D the Anglo–French command saw advantages, on one hand, in having the efforts of the allied forces linked up with those of the Belgian and Dutch armies and, on the other hand, in having the forward edge of the battle area greatly shortened and the possibility created of placing 12 to 15 divisions in reserve.

However, the plan undermined the very foundation of the static defense on which the French and English military commands had placed their main hopes in the coalition planning. The problem was that, according to Plan D, 35 divisions of allied forces were to make a maneuver march at the start of combat operations; thus, they would probably fall under attacks by enemy aviation and, possibly, encounter the enemy in meeting engagements. Consequently, at this stage of combat operations there could be no static defense. Nevertheless, in March 1940 Plan D was finally coordinated and approved by the allied command.

The new plan to deploy the allied forces was thus inherently inconsistent. But this was not its main shortcoming. The weakness of Plan D was that it was based on an erroneous assessment of the enemy's probable operations and on a major miscalculation in determining the axis of the main enemy attack.

The French high command did not wish, or was unable, to use the data from its intelligence, which promptly and quite accurately informed the general staff of the composition and grouping of forces in the fascist German army and of

the possibility that the enemy would make a main attack through the Ardennes. The high command did not even make provision to move reserves ›idly to the Ardennes axis if the threat of a deep breakthrough developed there.

Until the start of the German offensive, Plan D and the grouping of allied forces created on its basis, which were quite well known to the fascist German command, remained unchanged.

The Ardennes axis, on which the fascist German command was preparing to make the main attack, was poorly covered. The least combat-ready divisions were deployed there.

The military and political leadership of England and France attached great importance to planning coordinated combat operations at sea. The origin of the development of a plan for operations in the naval theaters of war went back to the summer of 1939, when the international situation was sharply aggravated by the spreading aggression of the fascist bloc. At this time common principles were agreed on for the combat use of the allied naval forces, and specific zones of operations were established for the English and French fleets in the English Channel, the Mediterranean, and the Atlantic. If Japan entered the war, a provision was made to distribute these naval forces in the Pacific and Indian oceans. It was recognized that holding Singapore was the principal factor determining the strategic situation in the Indian Ocean, the Far East, and Australia.

In planning the conduct of naval warfare the views and authority of the British Admiralty predominated, and the Admiralty, taking consideration of English interests and coalition strategy, worked out its own plan of naval operations.

The English naval plan attached primary importance to the defense of the homeland, since it was felt that the loss of supremacy in England's coastal waters or on the sea lanes leading to the British Isles would bring England to a quick and complete defeat. At the same time, great attention was paid to maintaining control over the Mediterranean, through which petroleum vitally important for England was shipped from the Persian Gulf and trade with India and the Far East was carried out.

To maintain control over the Mediterranean, great importance was attached to maintaining supremacy in the Red Sea and the Straits of Gibraltar. The leaders of England and France agreed that responsibility for the safety of communications in the western Mediterranean would be entrusted to the French naval command, and in the eastern part to the English. This made it possible for England to concentrate the main forces of its Mediterranean Fleet to protect the Red Sea and Suez Canal zone. It intended to shift ships from the Far East to this region. Considering the threat to its lines of communications in the Mediterranean from

Italian naval and air forces, the English naval command also decided to make wide use of the roundabout route to India and the Far East past the Cape of Good Hope.

The British Admiralty showed particular concern in protecting its sea lines of communications. In 1939 England had about 3,000 oceangoing vessels and tankers and around 1,000 coastal vessels; the total tonnage was approximately 21 million. Each day, as many as 2,500 ships were at sea.[16] These ships needed constant reliable protection against attack by enemy surface vessels and submarines. Searching out and destroying enemy ships was entrusted to the cruiser forces of the homeland and to the naval forces of the British Commonwealth.

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Thus, the strategic plans for the initial operations of the western powers (France, England, and Poland) had a defensive character. The western powers handed over the strategic initiative to the enemy in advance. In planning the initial operations, serious miscalculations were made in assessing the character of the enemy's combat operations and in determining the axis of the enemy's main attack.

Specific Features of the Strategic Planning in England and the U.S. After the Defeat of France

After the fall of France in the summer of 1940 England faced the acute problem of acquiring new allies, the most probable of which would be the U.S. England was seriously threatened by a fascist German invasion of its territory. The danger of an outbreak of war with militarist Japan was moving closer and closer. This threatened England with the loss of colonial possessions in the Pacific and Southeast Asia. The creation of a close Anglo–American coalition became a major element in English foreign policy.

In turn, the U.S. was interested in establishing a military and political alliance with England, since it was confronted with the growing danger of Japanese armed aggression in the Pacific. The U.S. considered that England might be defeated, after which it would be unable to handle the spread of aggression by fascist Germany and militarist Japan. Consequently, the entire course of developing events dictated the formation of an Anglo–American coalition.

In the U.S. work had started in the spring of 1939 on strategic plans (the Rainbow plans) that foresaw the possibility of waging war simultaneously against several nations. In November 1940 President Roosevelt approved proposals by the chiefs of staff of the army and navy stating that if America went to war with Germany, Italy, and Japan, the European theater of war must be viewed as the most vital, while in the Pacific a defensive strategy must be adhered to.

A start on the development of a coalition strategy by the U.S. and England was made at an Anglo–American staff conference that opened at the end of January 1941 in Washington. This conference was preceded by extended work by the military and naval staffs on each side in determining their position in the coming coalition war. At the conference the U.S. proposed the following program:

—The basic mission of the U.S. armed forces in the war is to defend the western hemisphere from military and political aggression by any power; at the same time, the U.S. will provide all possible aid to the British Empire in defending its interests;

—Germany is recognized as the chief opponent in the first stage of the war;

—In every possible way the U.S. will impede Japanese expansion by diplomatic means, but, if war breaks out with Japan, the U.S. will conduct a strategic defense in the Pacific during the first stage of the war, focusing its main efforts in the Atlantic and Europe.

Fully accepting the first two points of the American program, the English military leaders insisted at the same time that in addition to fascist Germany the area of the main efforts by the allied powers should include Italy and the entire Mediterranean Basin, the territories making up the zone of English interests. They felt that the decisive attack against fascist Germany should be made in the final stage of the war, and that up to that point the main methods of warfare should be a sea blockade and aerial bombing.

As for Southeast Asia and the Pacific, the English military command, without arguing against the conduct of a strategic defense in these theaters, felt that the American navy should assume the defense of British possessions in this region and, above all, should hold Singapore as a base for defending India, Australia, and New Zealand.

Assessing the strategic considerations of the English side, the American historian Louis Morton wrote: "In essence the English command was requesting a guarantee to defend the territories of the British Commonwealth countries and the acceptance of the English view as one of the central principles of allied strategy . . . even at the price of abandoning preparations for a decisive attack against Germany at the first opportunity."[17] Although agreeing with the English view on the necessity of holding Singapore, the Americans refused to allocate their ships to defend it, justifying this by the danger of weakening efforts in the main theater of operations—in Europe and the Atlantic.

After 2 months of debate the joint Anglo–American staff conference approved a compromise decision that came down to the following:

—"The European theater is the major theater of operations, and victory must be won here first. Germany and Italy must be defeated first, and then Japan can be dealt with";[18]

—The main efforts are to be concentrated in Europe and the Atlantic; operations in the other theaters will be conducted in the interests of supporting the main efforts;

—One of the immediate missions is to hold the English and allied positions in the Mediterranean Basin;

—If Japan enters the war in the Far East, a defensive strategy is to be maintained;

—While accumulating strength and preparing for a decisive attack against Germany, measures will be carried out for a sea blockade and air attacks against it, Italy will be put out of the war, and individual offensive operations will be conducted wherever possible.

The conference also reached agreement that a principal goal of the allied powers should be to achieve superiority over Germany in the quantity of strategic aviation as rapidly as possible.

The decision of the Anglo–American staff conference was examined by the governments of both nations, approved, and used as the basis for specific strategic planning in both the U.S. and England.

In the U.S. the last and principal version of the war plan—Rainbow 5—was worked out under this decision and approved by the joint army and navy staff on 14 May 1941. According to this plan, the following actions were to be taken against Germany and Italy:

"a) An economic blockade using naval, land, and air forces, and all other means, including control over the delivery of goods whose sources are under allied control, as well as the application of sanctions through financial channels or by diplomatic means;

"b) A continuous air offensive against Germany and air attacks against regions of other nations under the control of, and providing support to, the enemy;

"c) The rapid defeat of Italy as an active partner of the Axis powers;

"d) The use at every opportunity of allied air, land, and naval forces for raids and offensive operations of a local character against the Axis armed forces;

"e) Aid to neutral countries, to allies to England, to nations friendly with the U.S., and to inhabitants of territories occupied by the Axis powers in their resistance to the enemy;

"f) The accumulation of the forces necessary for a decisive offensive against Germany."[19]

In the western Atlantic, during the first stage of the war, the American armed forces were to defend the territory of the allied nations. In an invasion of this territory by enemy forces, the Americans were to support the Latin American republics in the armed struggle, as well as defend the coast of the U.S. and the islands of Newfoundland, the Bermudas, Jamaica, Trinidad, Saint Lucia, Antigua, and British Guiana. The American army was to replace English forces on the islands of Curacao and Aruba and in Iceland, and accumulate forces sufficient for a subsequent offensive against Germany. In this zone the navy was given the mission of protecting allied sea lines of communications and disrupting Axis communications.

In England and its territorial waters U.S. army aviation was to conduct offensive operations against objectives in Germany in cooperation with English aviation and was to provide for the defense of the bases used by the U.S. navy in the British Isles. For the immediate defense of the British Isles, one reinforced regiment was to be sent to England. In British territorial waters the U.S. navy, fighting under the command of the English, was to assume the escorting of transports on the western approaches to England. The U.S. navy was also called in to fight against enemy shipping in the Mediterranean.[20]

In the Pacific the U.S. army was entrusted with defending the Philippines and other allied territories, with preventing the spread of Axis aggression to the western hemisphere, and with assisting the navy in protecting the sea lines of communications and in defending the American coast and islands.

At the start of the war the U.S. Pacific Fleet was responsible for protecting allied sea lines of communications, disrupting Axis communications and destroying their naval forces, and defending the islands of Midway, Johnston, Palmira, Samoa, and Guam; it was to support the allied armed forces in the Pacific zone and to divert enemy forces from the "Malayan barrier,"* simultaneously preparing basing areas in the Caroline and Marshall islands for movement toward Manila. Together with the army, the U.S. Asiatic Fleet was to defend the Philippines as long as this defense was possible, and then together with allied forces defend the Malayan barrier.[21] The defense of the Philippine Islands was to be strengthened by troops and aviation so that the island of Corregidor could hold out at least 6 months until the Pacific Fleet arrived.[22] As forces were acquired, the U.S. navy would go over to active offensive operations.

*The so-called Malayan barrier included the Malay Peninsula, Sumatra, Java, and a chain of islands running to the east of Java toward Bathurst Island (Australia). Author's note.

The Rainbow-5 plan was to go into effect on the first day of mobilization, which could precede the declaration of war or hostile enemy operations. The U.S. army and navy departments were given the right to carry out certain measures in this plan before the day of mobilization. They compiled the schedules of troop transports for the overseas territories, proceeding on the assumption that the first day of mobilization would occur not earlier than 1 September 1941. The U.S. obligations to England would come into force only after this date.[23]

The initial period of the war in the Far East and in the Pacific, according to the Rainbow-5 plan, was thus seen by the Anglo-American coalition as defensive, while the initiative in operations was consciously conceded to the Japanese. The switch to the offensive was planned only after the allies had acquired the necessary men and equipment.

Fascist Germany's treacherous attack on the USSR brought fundamental changes in the strategic planning of England and, later, of the U.S. This aggressive act eliminated the threat of a fascist German invasion of the British Isles. The Anglo-American leadership, following its anti-Soviet foreign policy, at first decided to refrain from active operations against the fascist German forces in the European theater of war, counting on the mutual exhaustion of the USSR and Germany. At the same time this leadership sought to convince world public opinion that all the efforts of England and the U.S. were directed against fascist Germany.

In memoranda to the chiefs of staff compiled in 1941, W. Churchill wrote:

"The main factors in the war at present are the defeats and losses of Hitler in Russia.... Now, instead of the intended quick and easy victory, he is confronted by a winter filled with major losses in personnel and enormous outlays of fuel and supplies.

"Neither Great Britain nor the U.S. should take any part in these events, with the exception that we are obliged with scrupulous precision to provide all of the deliveries of supplies that we promised. Only in this manner can we retain our influence over Stalin, and only in this manner can we weave the efforts of the Russians into the common fabric of the war."[24]

According to these memoranda, no active operations against fascist Germany were projected in the strategic plans of England and the U.S. even after the defeat of the fascist German forces at Moscow and the start of the war with Japan. But the declared scrupulousness in delivering supplies to the Soviet Union was not always observed. The main military efforts of the western allies were concentrated in the Near East, North Africa, and the Pacific. The repelling of enemy blows in the west and east was to be carried out by already existing troop groupings of the first strategic echelon, after which mass deployment of the armed forces was planned.

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The major capitalist nations' strategic plans for initial operations can be divided into two main groups. The first group includes the plans of fascist Germany, Italy, and imperialist Japan; the second group consists of those of the capitalist nations opposing that bloc.

A distinguishing feature of the strategic plans of the nations in the fascist bloc lay in their pronounced offensive character. They were all based on the idea of seizing the strategic initiative at the start of the war by making a powerful surprise attack against the enemy with all the forces that a nation was able to assemble on the battlefield by the time it entered the war. Plans usually called for deploying these forces in a single strategic echelon to ensure from the first minutes of war total superiority over the enemy in men and equipment and overwhelming superiority on the main axes.

Initial operations were considered decisive in achieving the goals of the war. These operations were to result in the decisive defeat of the enemy's ground, naval, and air forces.

Another distinguishing feature of fascist German strategic planning was the use of large masses of aviation and tanks for initial operations. They were massed on the main axes.

The specific nature of Japanese strategic planning was determined by the need for Japan's armed forces to fight in military operations at sea. The Japanese command employed most of its naval ships and the bulk of its carrier-based and land-based aviation in the initial operations. They were assigned the main role in achieving the first successes.

The strategic plans for the initial operations of the capitalist nations opposing the bloc of aggressive nations were imbued with ideas of defense, calculated, as a rule, for a long period. The goal of the deliberate strategic defense was to counter blitzkrieg warfare with a drawn-out war to exhaust the enemy. A specific feature of France's strategic plan was its call to conduct a stubborn static defense on the country's eastern borders from the start of war. In choosing a strategy of defensive maneuver in the Pacific, England and the U.S. foresaw the possibility of temporarily abandoning territories and waters under their control to the enemy. However, the same goal was pursued in both situations: to undermine enemy offensive capability and exhaust enemy potential with drawn-out defensive engagements on land, a naval blockade, and air attacks. There was to be a simultaneous buildup of men and equipment to deliver a decisive defeat to the enemy.

Notes

1. *XVII s"yezd Vsesoyuznoy Kommunisticheskoy partii (bol'shevikov). 10-21 marta 1939 g. Stenograficheskiy otchet* [The 18th Congress of the All-Union Communist Party (of Bolsheviks), 10-21 March 1939: A Stenographic Record] (Moscow: Gospolitizdat, 1939), p. 14.
2. See *Sovershenno sekretno! Tol'ko dlya komandovaniya! Dokumenty i materialy* [Top Secret! For Command Eyes Only! Documents and Materials] (Moscow: Izdatel'stvo "Nauka," 1967), p. 113. [Hereafter cited as *Top Secret!*—U.S. Ed.]
3. *Istoriya Pol'shi* [The History of Poland] (Moscow: Izdatel'stvo AN SSSR, 1958), III, 531.
4. See D.M. Proektor, *Voyna v Yevrope 1939-1941 gg.* [The War in Europe 1939-1941] (Moscow: Voyenizdat 1963), pp. 228-229. [Hereafter cited as Proektor—U.S. Ed.]
5. The table is based on B. Muller-Hillebrand, *Sukhoputnaya armiya Germanii 1933-1945 gg* [The German Army 1933-1945] (Moscow: Izdatel'stvo inostrannoy literatury, 1956), II, 11, 14-15, 54-55, 58-59. [Hereafter cited as Muller-Hillebrand—U.S. Ed.]
6. See S. Roskill, *Flot i voyna* [The Navy and War] (Moscow: Voyenizdat, 1967), p. 34. [Hereafter cited as Roskill—U.S. Ed.]
7. See J. Butler and J. Gwyer, *Bol'shaya strategiya. Iyun' 1941-Avgust 1942* [The Grand Strategy: June 1941-August 1942] (Moscow: Voyenizdat, 1967), p. 196. [Hereafter cited as Butler and Gwyer—U.S. Ed.]
8. Lenin, XLII, 94.
9. *War World II Outline*, p. 786.
10. Hayashi, *The Japanese Army in the Pacific*, p. 38.
11. See *Vazhneyshiye resheniya. Sbornik statey* [Major Decisions: A Collection of Articles] (Moscow: Voyenizdat, 1964), p. 107. [Hereafter cited as *Major Decisions*—U.S. Ed.]
12. See Hayashi, *The Japanese Army in the Pacific*, pp. 50, 51.
13. See Butler and Gwyer, p. 227.
14. J. Butler, *Bol'shaya strategiya. Sentyabr' 1939-Iyun' 1941* [The Grand Strategy: September 1939-June 1941] (Moscow: Izdatel'stvo inostrannoy literatury, 1959), p. 72. [Hereafter cited as Butler—U.S. Ed.]
15. Ibid., pp. 31-32.
16. See Roskill, p. 19.
17. *Major Decisions*, p. 69.
18. Matloff and Snell, p. 50.
19. Ibid., p. 62.
20. See Matloff and Snell, pp. 64, 65.
21. Ibid.
22. See F. S. Sherman, *Amerikanskiye avianostsy v voyne na Tikhom okeane* [American Aircraft Carriers in the War in the Pacific] (Moscow: Voyenizdat, 1956), pp. 27, 28, 30. [Hereafter cited as Sherman—U.S. Ed.]
23. See Matloff and Snell, p. 65.
24. Butler and Gwyer, p. 246.

Chapter 5. Methods of Strategic Deployment of the Capitalist Nations' Armed Forces

Strategic deployment in World War II amounted to a set of measures carried out by the various nations drawn into the war. These included mobilization deployment of the armed forces; strategic concentration of forces in the theaters of operations; deployment of the armed forces in the theaters in specific strategic and operational groupings and their occupation of initial positions to conduct combat operations; and cover for mobilization, concentration, and deployment operations against enemy attacks from the air, sea, and land.

Influenced by the rapid development of the technology for conducting combat operations, the strategic deployment of the main capitalist nations' armed forces assumed new features on the eve of and at the start of World War II, while the methods used to carry out this deployment underwent considerable changes.

In accord with established views on the character of a future war as one exerting maximum stress on a nation's material and spiritual resources, concepts on the content of mobilization were fundamentally altered in the nations of the fascist bloc and among their adversaries. While mobilization had previously been regarded only as a conversion of the armed forces from a peacetime status to a state of war—as a strictly military mobilization—it now became a universal mobilization to prepare an entire nation to supply war needs. This included industry, agriculture, transportation, communications, science, administration, the system for building the morale of the population, and so forth.

Economic mobilization acquired decisive importance. It was interpreted as the organized use of a nation's economic resources to conduct war. Economic mobilization required the development of special mobilization plans, according to which, at the start of war, many industrial enterprises turning out peacetime products would be converted to the production of war materials.

For the various nations to make use of virtually their entire populations in the war, it was necessary for the bourgeois governments to conduct political mobilization in advance. With the start of military operations this mobilization assumed tremendous scope. Preparing for war and attempting to strengthen the home front, the ruling classes launched a frenzied chauvinistic propaganda campaign and, proclaiming the need to protect the nation, carried out attacks against

society's progressive forces, primarily the communists, who were exposing the imperialist character of the bourgeois governments' policy.

Anticommunism, elevated to the level of state policy in the aggressive nations, was combined with unrestrained racism, ideas of revenge, and a struggle for lebensraum.

Economic and political mobilization measures, closely linked with military mobilization itself, were called on to support successful deployment and employment of the armed forces to achieve the war's political goals.

1. Armed Forces Mobilization Deployment

Mobilization Deployment in Germany and Japan

Preparing for and carrying out mobilization in Germany. Germany actually began preparations for the mobilization deployment of its army immediately after its defeat in World War I. With the coming to power of fascism the pace and scope were greatly intensified.

The planning to increase the size of the peacetime army started in 1926 with the elaboration of the so-called Plan A, according to which there was to be a 3-fold increase, from 7 to 21, in the number of divisions. In the summer of 1934 the plan was carried out. In this manner the basis was created for manning the army on the principle of universal military service, which was introduced in 1935. By the autumn of 1936 the ground army already had 41 divisions.

The deployment of the wartime army was carried out under the mobilization plan for 1939-1940 and the directives for strategic employment in accord with the so-called Weiss plan.

The mobilization plan of 1939-1940 provided for:

1) the completion of a number of projects to accelerate and systematically carry out mobilization deployment immediately before the war;

2) the conduct of mobilization, either total or partial, without an official declaration of war (the x version);

3) the possibility of carrying out mobilization with an official declaration of war (the mobilization version).

The plan envisioned an almost 2-fold increase in the number of divisions (see table 3).

Table 3. Increase in the Number of Fighting Formations by Mobilization.[1]

Formations	1937–1938		1939–1940	
	Peacetime	Wartime	Peacetime	Wartime
Infantry divisions	32	61	35	86
Alpine rifle brigades	1	1	3	3
Motorized divisions	4	4	4	4
Light infantry divisions	1	1	4	4
Tank divisions	3	3	5	5
Cavalry brigades	1	1	1	1
Total	42	71	52	103

The formation of mobile forces was basically finished by 1938. With the declaration of mobilization it was merely a matter of bringing them up to a wartime level; in particular, logistics units for the tank divisions had to be formed. The time needed to convert mobile formations to wartime levels was 12 hours, and in the border regions 3 to 6 hours. The same period for mobilization readiness, 3 to 6 hours, was required for the regular infantry divisions deployed in the border zone. The acceleration in mobilization times was achieved, on one hand, by constantly keeping these formations up to levels approaching those for wartime and, on the other, by allowing the formations themselves to call up reservists and to get needed transport from regions directly adjacent to their permanent deployment points.

The complete mobilization of the infantry divisions was to be carried out in so-called waves. The first wave of formations was composed of 35 regular peacetime divisions, the second was made up of 16 divisions assembled with the declaration of mobilization, the third included 21 militia divisions, and the fourth was made up of 14 divisions created from the training battalions, which had been greatly increased in 1938.

The time for mobilization readiness was set for the formations of the first wave, except for divisions with a shortened period of readiness, at 1200 hours of the second day; and for the newly made up units, at 1200 hours of the third day of mobilization. For the divisions of the second, third, and fourth waves the time for mobilization readiness was set at 2000 hours of the sixth day of mobilization.

Many of the peacetime formations had an organizational structure that made it easy to bring their numbers up to wartime levels without declaring any mobilization; for example, this was done under the pretext of calling up reservists and assigning transport for exercises. Thus, under the 1939–1940 mobilization plan, in the infantry divisions of the first wave, 31 regiments of two battalions each were brought up to full levels precisely in such a manner, and reservists were used to form a third battalion. This to a great degree contributed to the concealed conversion of the army to a wartime status immediately before the war.

An important role in reducing the time to carry out mobilization was played by dividing the regions of complete mobilization and the formation of new units in such a manner as to minimize the mobilization transport of personnel and materiel, and to create mobilization reserves near the points of organization. Dividing the regions strictly by the territorial principle accelerated mobilization and contributed to its concealment.

Of great importance in preparing for mobilization was the conduct of varied-scale mobilization exercises and test complete mobilizations, all of which pursued a dual goal. First, with the help of these measures, the effectiveness of premobilization and mobilization measures was checked and skills in conducting a mobilization were developed; and, second, these exercises and test mobilizations were designed to undermine the vigilance of the population in foreign countries and in Germany, for the periodic occurrence of these measures gradually became customary, and the fears that arose were dissipated.

Much attention was devoted to the systematic buildup of reservists. Until 1935, the training of reservists was concealed through various volunteer paramilitary organizations; after 1935, it was conducted under universal military conscription.

The inclusion of numerous quasimilitary and paramilitary formations in the general system of mobilization preparations helped in building up reservists and in accelerating the mobilization deployment of the army. For example, with the declaration of mobilization, construction units were very quickly made up from the youth organization of the Imperial Labor Conscription. They numbered around a half million persons.

On the eve of World War II the system for training reservists in fascist Germany made it possible to fully meet the mobilization requirements for unleashing aggressive actions and, during all of World War II, to put about 17 million people under arms. This was 24.5 percent of the total population; in World War I, 13.2 million people (19.7 percent of the population) were inducted into the army.

Air force flying units and navy crews were deployed in peacetime (see table 4).

The methods of mobilization deployment for the armed forces in fascist Germany were subordinate to the idea of making a powerful initial attack against the enemy at the moment when it least expected this attack. The methods were marked by diversity, but had common features in that they were always concealed and were carried out with consideration of the specific military and political situation.

The conduct of partial mobilizations under the cover of limited military actions. Local wars and any limited military actions were widely used by the fascist nations for a gradual and concealed mobilization deployment of the armed forces. For example, fascist Germany carried out a concealed deployment of

Table 4. Deployment of the Air Force and Navy Under the 1939-1940 Mobilization Plan.

	Peacetime	Wartime
Staffs:		
fleets	4	4
districts	10	10
divisions	7	7
air regiments	22	23
antiaircraft regiments	22	41
Air Force:		
air squadrons	86	89
antiaircraft battalions	79	288
security battalions	4	4
signal battalions	54	59
Navy:		
battleships	2	2
light battleships	2	2
heavy cruisers	4	4
light cruisers	6	6
destroyers	20	20
minelayers	10	10
submarines	57	57

the army, using aggressive actions like the anschluss of Austria, the annexation of the Sudetenland, the occupation of Czechoslovakia, and so forth.

The start for creating a system of concealed complete mobilization of the armed forces in Hitlerite Germany was established by a directive from Minister of War Blomberg on 24 June 1937, in which he demanded:

1) A guarantee from the German armed forces of constant readiness for mobilization until completion of the weapons program and achievement of full preparedness for war....

2) Further work on mobilization without a public declaration in order to bring the armed forces to a state of readiness for the start of a war of any scale at the required moment.[2]

The first partial mobilization was conducted in March 1938 under the Otto plan (the anschluss of Austria). During this mobilization, two Bavarian corps regions, the 7th and 13th, were fully mobilized. It was a sort of dress rehearsal, the lessons of which were considered in the subsequent partial mobilizations. Fascist Germany conducted a second partial mobilization during the execution of the Grun plan (the annexation of the Sudetenland) in the autumn of 1938. At this time, full mobilization of the troops was carried out under the pretext of calling up reservists for "training courses and maneuvers." From that time, this principle was a permanent element in a concealed mobilization.

Using these aggressive actions, the fascist command concealed that it immediately brought up to wartime strength 18 new divisions and 5 corps directorates. Organizationally, many formations were close to wartime levels; for example, the infantry divisions of the first wave, made up of two-battalion regiments, were increased to 24 battalions. At this time, certain artillery and special troop units were organized for the infantry divisions.

During this period, conditions were created for deploying the divisions of the fourth wave.

The increase in the pace of concealed mobilization deployment in a period of threat. The pace and scope of mobilization measures grew after the fascist leadership of Germany made the decision to attack Poland. These measures were carried out under the 3 April 1939 directive "On the Unified Preparation of the Armed Forces for 1939-1940."

According to this directive, the fascist German command, in attaching decisive importance to preempting the enemy in deployment and to securing a surprise attack, planned to use in the offensive only regular divisions that had been brought up to wartime levels and had taken up the starting position in advance. "The operation must be prepared in such a manner," the directive stated, "that it will be possible to act with the forces intended initially, without waiting for the systematic deployment of the fully mobilized formations. It is essential that these forces secretly occupy the starting positions immediately before the day for starting the offensive."[3]

Mobilization was to be declared at the latest possible time—on the day before the attack—and a surprise invasion was to be made to thwart a Polish mobilization. The first day of combat operations and the first day of mobilization were thus to coincide, while combat operations would be started before all the forces would be able to concentrate in their starting areas. The units that had not been able to concentrate in their starting areas were to be committed to battle in keeping with the advance to the planned axes. Reservists called up under mobilization in this instance would arrive in their units during combat operations. It was assumed that in addition to bringing their units up to wartime levels, reservists were also to be used to create units that had not been organized in peacetime, for example, logistics support units. Consequently, during the first day of combat operations it would be possible to make use of most of the motorized and tank divisions, whose conversion time to wartime levels was 3 to 12 hours, and of part of the infantry divisions in the first wave with an accelerated full mobilization time. The remaining divisions would reach the area of combat operations 3 to 7 days after full mobilization.

Thus, at this time the fascist German command was planning to start the war with an invasion army created in advance, that is, in accord with the military theory views that were widespread during the prewar years in virtually all nations.

For such a mobilization deployment, it was very important to carry out as soon as possible a whole set of premobilization measures and to secretly bring to combat readiness the maximum number of formations assigned for initial operations.

The premobilization period was divided into three stages corresponding to the government and military control organs' three levels of readiness to put the planned measures into effect: mobilization readiness, increased mobilization readiness, and the start of mobilization. Since there were many measures of a premobilization character, over 120 of them, they were divided into three groups under the headings "readiness," "march readiness," and "support." Depending on the tenseness of the military and political situation, from one to the entire group of measures was to be carried out.

The first group of measures ("readiness") included activating special telephone networks of first precedence; bringing wireless communications to constant readiness; strengthening the security service; halting the movement of troop units; halting missions and patrols; preparing military storage dumps and issuing ammunition and supplies; prohibiting leaves, and so forth.

The second group of measures ("march readiness") included calling up specialists; bringing military units to full combat readiness; preparing fuels and lubricants; loading trains with ammunition; sending personnel from peacetime units to mobilization areas for new formations; putting into force regulations on the higher command organs of the wartime army; bringing previously designated troop units and staffs to march readiness, and so forth.

The third group of measures ("support") included activating special telephone networks of second precedence; restricting or stopping border crossings; occupying part of the border fortifications; accelerating preparations for using the border troops; secretly fully mobilizing troop units near the border; carrying out measures to construct obstacles; preparing to carry out destruction; evacuating the civilian population from border regions.[4]

A start was made on carrying out premobilization measures throughout the country on 18 August 1939, a week before the date planned initially for the invasion of Poland; in East Prussia these measures were already being carried out in July.

From the spring of 1939 intensified efforts were made to secretly bring the troops to combat readiness and to put mobilization measures into effect. Thus, in May, 6 army commands, 11 army corps commands, and 24 divisions were brought to combat readiness. The formation of new divisions, 1 infantry and 1 tank, was continued. Under the pretext of preparing for the autumn maneuvers, at the start of August a partial mobilization was carried out for certain divisions of the second and third waves, as well as for units of army and corps subor-

dination. In East Prussia, from 16 August, concealed mobilization actually started, as a result of which the 3rd Army, concentrated there by 25 August, was fully ready for operations. By this same date all the mobile formations and one-half the infantry divisions of the first wave had been brought up to wartime levels, while the remaining formations were being filled out with reservists.

Thus, in fascist Germany, even before the start of general mobilization, an invasion army of 37 formations had been created: 22 infantry, 6 tank, 4 motorized, 4 light infantry divisions, and a cavalry brigade. This corresponded to 35 percent of the composition of the wartime ground forces, 85 percent of the tank forces, and 100 percent of the motorized and light infantry divisions; this was 63 percent—almost two-thirds—of the forces allocated for combat operations in the east, while, according to prewar views, the invasion army was to include one-third of the forces being deployed.[5]

Consequently, by increasing the pace of concealed deployment during the period of threat, the fascist German army was brought to a state so that, when general mobilization was declared, it was necessary merely to finish carrying out the measures already planned.

The conduct of a general concealed mobilization before the start of war. Even before the start of military operations the fascist German command carried out in an extremely brief period a general mobilization in the same concealed manner in which the partial mobilizations had been carried out. In addition, the composition of the ground forces was increased to the numbers determined beforehand (see table 5).

As can be seen from the table, the number of divisions in the first and third waves remained the same. The number of divisions in the second wave doubled, while the divisions in the fourth wave were re-formed. Twenty-two formations were newly created. Characteristically, organization of these formations actually started on 18 August, on the day premobilization measures began, while the

Table 5. Increase in the Composition of the Ground Forces After Mobilization (25–31 August).[6]

Waves	Divisions	Number of divisions before mobilization	Number of divisions after mobilization
1	Infantry	35	35
	Alpine rifle	3	3
	Motorized	4	4
	Tank	5	5
	Light infantry	4	4
	Cavalry brigade	1	1
2	Infantry	--	16
3	Infantry	--	21
4	Infantry	--	14
	Total formations:	52	103

necessary base for creating the fourth-wave divisions had been prepared, as already pointed out, in 1938.

The signal to conduct the general mobilization was given during the second half of 25 August, one day before the intended start of the war. An order was given at the same time to put the high command on a wartime status.

On the same day, because of a number of political and strategic considerations, the invasion of Poland was changed from 26 August to 1 September. However, the concealed mobilization and the deployment of forces on the border continued.

As a result of the general concealed mobilization, by 1 September, 108 formations had been fully mobilized (5 formations more than called for in the plan), as well as 3 staffs of army groups, 8 army staffs, 20 corps staffs, a large number of army and corps units and formations, and a reserve army. The size of the army in the field reached 2.3 million men (100 percent), and the reserve army, 740,000 men (75 percent).

Thus, the fascist German command in fact abandoned the transition to an offensive by an invasion army, having completed by the start of the war a full mobilization deployment of a wartime army. When the aggression against Poland was started, Hitlerite Germany threw all the might of its main forces into the first attack; the use of these forces had been planned for the first strategic operation.

This principle of conducting combat operations from the start of the war—making the first attack with the main forces—became the leading one in conducting the initial operations of the fascist German army in the east and west. It came to determine the general character of the entry of fascist Germany into the war.

Specific features of the mobilization deployment of the Japanese armed forces. In essence, the methods of the mobilization deployment of the Japanese armed forces differed little from those used by fascist Germany, since at their basis they had the same aggressive political calculations and approximately the same military theory concepts (the theories of blitzkrieg and total war). As in Germany, the preparation of the Japanese armed forces for war—in particular, mobilization deployment for war—was carried out gradually and secretly. In addition, the Japanese military and political leadership unswervingly used local wars and military provocations to conduct partial mobilizations, whose pace and scope increased on the eve of and during these actions.

One of the specific features of the mobilization deployment of the Japanese armed forces was its noticeable intensification after the signing of the Anti-

Comintern Pact by Japan (November 1936) and on the eve of the previously planned aggression against China (July 1937).

The gradual deployment of the Japanese armed forces was carried out under the 1937 mobilization plan, which called for the creation of an army of 51 divisions.

In 1937, before the attack on China, the Japanese ground forces included 17 infantry divisions and a number of independent regiments and brigades, while the air force had 17 air regiments and support units.

During the military operations against China, Japan, in increasing the size of its armed forces, carried out several partial mobilizations.

In 1937, 24 infantry divisions were fully mobilized, and 16 were moved to China.

Preparing for a major war against the USSR and its imperialist competitors, Japan stubbornly continued to further expand its armed forces. Thus, in 1938, 10 infantry divisions were fully mobilized and new formations were organized. In 1939 another 7 divisions were created.

The number of divisions in the Japanese army over this period increased annually in the following manner: in 1937, there were 24; in 1938, 34; in 1939, 41; and in 1940, 50. Thus, the 1937 mobilization plan had been carried out by 1940.[7]

By the start of war in the Pacific the Japanese ground forces had 51 infantry divisions and 58 independent brigades.[8] During the war the Japanese army grew tremendously. By the end of the war Japan had 173 infantry divisions, 4 tank divisions, 88 infantry brigades, and 6 tank brigades.[9]

The increase in ground forces aviation, under the plan approved in 1937, was to be from 54 to 142 air squadrons. This was changed in 1939. The Japanese military command intended by the end of 1943 to bring the number up to 162 squadrons. In fact, the composition changed in the following manner: there were 70 air squadrons in 1938, 94 in 1939, 106 in 1940, and 150 in 1941.[10] In all, Japanese army aviation numbered 1,500 combat aircraft.

The navy had 10 battleships, 10 aircraft carriers, 38 cruisers, 112 destroyers, and 65 submarines. Naval aviation had 3,702 aircraft.[11]

By the end of 1941 the size of the Japanese army reached 2.1 million men. The size of all the armed forces was 2.4 million men.[12]

Characteristic for Japan was a comparatively low mobilization effort. While the number of persons mobilized in World War II in fascist Germany equaled 24.5 percent of the total population, in Japan it was around 10 percent.

Mobilization Deployment of the Polish and French Armed Forces

Poland. The mobilization system in effect in Poland on the eve of the war in many ways lagged behind the mobilization systems in the other capitalist countries. Poland's mobilization plans were based on a military theory concept that held that a future war would start in the same manner, or in almost the same manner, as World War I; thus, there would be the "classic" stages of mobilization, concentration, deployment of armed forces, and, finally, the start of actual military operations.

In truth, the Polish mobilization plan partially assumed a situation where Poland could be caught by the enemy unprepared. However, it was still felt—and this was the main thing—that Germany, before starting active combat operations, would first have to carry out mobilization, concentration, and deployment of its forces, and, consequently, would lose a certain amount of time on these measures. This would make it possible for the Polish command to detect Germany's preparations for the attack and to take the necessary measures in response, even if Germany would be somewhat ahead of Poland in carrying out similar measures. Here it was assumed that Germany would, as in World War I, carry out an open and not a concealed mobilization, as actually happened.

The Polish mobilization plan provided for bringing the armed forces to a state of combat readiness both throughout the nation and in one or more corps districts. In a local conflict, an invasion corps was to be fielded. Mobilization could be carried out in two ways: by an outright declaration of mobilization (universal mobilization) and by alert after issuance of special call-up cards to reservists and to owners of horses, carts, and motor vehicles (concealed mobilization).

Under the Polish plan, 30 regular infantry divisions, 9 reserve divisions, 5 infantry and 11 cavalry brigades, and 2 armored brigades were to be fully mobilized. All of these formations were part of the so-called line troops. In addition to the line troops, home guard formations were also to be deployed. March battalions were to be created to replenish the line troops. The ground forces were to include 7 armies and 4 operations groups.

Under the Polish mobilization plan, 15 fighter, 9 bomber, and 7 reconnaissance squadrons, 12 support squadrons, and 12 liaison aircraft platoons were to be deployed, as well as a certain number of auxiliary technical and logistics units. The bomber and fighter units were to be at the disposal of the commander in chief.

On the eve of the attack by fascist Germany, the Polish navy consisted of a division of destroyers, a division of submarines, a division of minelayers, and a group of patrol boats. Ship crews were made up of personnel who had served on active duty. With the declaration of mobilization in the navy, auxiliary service and supply units were to be organized.

Under the mobilization plan, a marine brigade, a maritime national defense brigade, artillery units, other units, and the garrison of the Helska Point fortified area were to be deployed to defend the coast.

The size of the Polish armed forces, under the mobilization plan, was to be approximately 1.5 million men.[13]

As of 1 June 1939, the Polish armed forces numbered about 440,000 men (without the border guard corps). In the ground forces there were 30 infantry divisions, 11 cavalry brigades, and an armored brigade.

The concealed mobilization deployment of the armed forces started in the country in March 1939, when German-Polish relations took a noticeable turn for the worse. However, at this time, it was carried out on a limited scale, without sufficient conviction and tenacity.* One of the important reasons for this was the Polish government's fear that by carrying out mobilization measures, it would provoke an attack by Germany on Poland.

On 23 August a mobilization deployment was carried out for most of the formations kept in constant combat readiness. However, this still was not a general mobilization, which the Polish government announced after much hesitation on 31 August—on the day before fascist aggression against Poland. General mobilization was proclaimed with a clear delay. By the start of the war, it had not been possible to complete the deployment of many formations, particularly of the reserve divisions.

On 1 September 1939 the number of Polish troops in the operational field forces of the first echelon was 840,000 (70 percent of the planned number).

France. The main feature of the mobilization deployment of the French army was its virtual completion by May 1940, the start of active combat operations in the Western European theater.

To a certain degree, this was explained by the use of a quite flexible mobilization system that had been carefully worked out by the French general staff. This system was adopted energetically when fascist Germany's aggressive operations directly affected the interests of French monopolistic capital. The French

*On 23 March a partial mobilization was carried out, as a result of which four infantry divisions and a cavalry brigade were fully mobilized, and the size of the formations was increased in a number of districts. Moreover, the staffs of four armies and an operations group were created. Author's note.

mobilization plan provided for carrying out a whole set of measures for the strategic deployment of the armed forces, including mobilization, concentration, and cover for the troops. From August 1939, when fascist Germany noticeably intensified preparations to unleash war, premobilization measures began in France as well at an accelerated pace.

As General Gamelin stated,* by 27 August, through concealed partial mobilizations, 848,000 men had been called into the French armed forces; on 27 August alone, 725,000 men were called up. By the end of that day, the French armed forces had reached a size of 2,674,000 men; thus, in France a covering army had in fact been created to conduct the first defensive operations (see table 6).

Table 6. Increase in the Size of the French Armed Forces After the Concealed Partial Mobilization of 27 August 1939.

Categories of personnel	France	N. Africa	Near East	Colonies	Total
		Army			
Regular	550,000	171,000	28,000	116,000	865,000
Called up before 27 Aug	825,000	23,000			848,000
Called up on 27 Aug	725,000				725,000
Total:	2,100,000	194,000	28,000	116,000	2,438,000
		Navy			
Regular					90,000
Called up before 27 Aug					12,000
Called up on 27 Aug					24,000
Total:					126,000
		Air Force			
Regular					50,000
Called up before 27 Aug					30,000
Called up on 27 Aug					30,000
Total:					110,000
Grand total:					2,674,000

On 2 September, when a general open mobilization was declared in France, there were about 92 formations on French territory: 72 infantry divisions (regular, reserve, North African, colonial, and fortress troops equal to 15 divi-

*From 1938 General Gamelin was chief of the French general staff, and, with the start of war, became commander in chief of the ground forces in all theaters of operations. Author's note.

sions), 3 cavalry divisions, 2 light mechanized divisions, and 40 independent tank battalions.

The "phony war" already under way made it possible for the French military command to complete the general mobilization.

Specific Features of Armed Forces Mobilization Deployment in England and the U.S.

England. The mobilization deployment of the English and U.S. armed forces had specific features that were determined by the military doctrines and geographic locations of these nations.

As is well known, according to official military views and strategic plans, the English and U.S. ruling circles put the culmination point of their war efforts at the war's end. It was assumed that the mobilization deployment of the armed forces would start after these nations had entered the war. The ruling English and U.S. political and military figures, in working out the mobilization plans, recognized that because of their geographic locations, these countries did not have to fear a surprise enemy invasion of their territories. For this reason, neither England nor the U.S. kept large land armies in peacetime. England and the U.S. devoted a great deal of attention only to enlarging their navies and keeping them in combat readiness. In addition, in England, on the eve of the war, the air force was being developed intensely. Great importance was also attached to national air defense.

The English navy, by the start of World War II, was one of the most powerful in the world and included 12 battleships, 3 battle cruisers, 7 aircraft carriers, 15 heavy and 50 light cruisers, 184 destroyers, and 69 submarines. Another 7 battleships, 19 cruisers, and 6 aircraft carriers were under construction. English carrier-based aviation numbered around 500 aircraft, and shore-based naval aviation had 232.

After the start of World War II, England's principal efforts were concentrated on building ships that could be commissioned before 1942. At the same time, some of the ships being built for other nations were requisitioned. Great attention was paid to building auxiliary naval vessels, and particularly to refitting merchant vessels as raiders and minesweepers.[14]

The development of the English air force was carried out under a plan approved in 1938. Its fulfillment was expected not sooner than March 1942. Under this plan 163 squadrons (2,549 first-line aircraft) were to be deployed in the homeland and 49 squadrons (636 aircraft) beyond its borders. By the designated date the home air force was to have 85 squadrons of heavy bombers and 50 fighter squadrons.

By the start of the war this plan was far from complete. On 1 September 1939 the English air force in fact had 95 squadrons in the homeland (including 37 bomber squadrons, 39 fighter squadrons, and 19 squadrons of coastal command aircraft) and 34 squadrons beyond its borders. In all, by the start of the war the English air force had about 3,500 aircraft, including about 1,500 first-line aircraft and about 2,000 in the reserve.

The main purpose of the changes made by the start of the war in the plan for deploying the air force was to give the advantage in the development rate to fighter aviation because of the real threat of direct attacks against England by the fascist German air force. By September 1940 the fighter aviation forces were to be brought up to 60 squadrons, and by 1 April 1941, up to 80 squadrons. In fact, during the first 4 months of the war, 18 new fighter squadrons were created, and their number was brought up to 57, while bomber aviation had 37 squadrons. The mobilization plan made provisions that the number of aircraft would increase to 12,000 by March 1942, and somewhat later would increase by another 5,500. For this it was essential to increase aircraft production from 750 to 1,000 a month, and in 18 months up to 2,000 a month. In September 1939 the decision was made to expand aircraft production to 2,550 aircraft a month, including up to 250 in the Commonwealth. Extensive training of flying personnel was set up, and, in 1942, the number turned out had already reached 60,000 men.[15]

The revision of plans for deploying the ground forces in England started in the spring of 1939. In the homeland by that time there were 6 regular and 13 territorial divisions. The plan was then to double the number of territorial divisions and to bring the composition of the ground forces up to 32 divisions.

From spring until the start of autumn 1939 the English government hurriedly approved a number of legislative acts, whose purpose was to accelerate the mobilization readiness of the country and its overseas possessions. Of particular importance were laws on compulsory military training (May 1939) and on the armed forces; the latter announced on 1 September the introduction of universal military service in England.

These legislative acts, undoubtedly, played a major role in the mobilization deployment of the English armed forces. Suffice it to say that they provided for the creation of extensive human resources for the new formations. However, when on 1 September a general mobilization was proclaimed in England, it turned out to be poorly prepared. The problem was that no provision had been made to create administrative and supply units for the newly formed formations, there were not enough trained military instructors to train the personnel filling out the territorial army, there was no logistical base for the deployment of new corps and armies, and so forth.

The new decisions of the English government required still another revision of the mobilization plan even after the start of the war. Thus, the deployment of the ground forces underwent substantial changes. By the end of the second year of the war, by September 1941, under the revised plan, 55 divisions were to be fielded, including 32 divisions in the homeland. This meant that at least 20 divisions had to be created in the first year of the war.[16]

Thus, the English government, although starting to increase the size of the ground forces several months before the start of the war, still put its main efforts in this matter on the period after the start of the war, on its first or even second year.

The United States. In the United States' armed forces, as in England's, the leading role was played by the navy. By the start of the war it was the most powerful in the world and included 16 battleships, 7 aircraft carriers, 18 heavy and 18 light cruisers, 181 destroyers, and 111 submarines.[17] In addition, there were 8 battleships, 3 aircraft carriers, 4 heavy and 21 light cruisers, 98 destroyers, and 37 submarines under construction. Naval aviation had 1,885 aircraft, including about 500 that were carrier-based.

During the prewar years the U.S. lagged far behind the main capitalist nations in the development of its army and air force. According to Army Chief of Staff General Marshall, the army had barely 3½ divisions scattered in small units over the entire nation. The air force, organizationally part of the army, consisted of several undermanned squadrons.

The U.S. actually began to create an army and an air force after fascist Germany unleashed war in Europe. In July 1941, when the United States was still not taking part in the war, the U.S. president officially requested figures on the armed forces' materiel needs. In September 1941 the war department set to work on strategic calculations to determine the size of the mobilization and deployment of the American army. These calculations underlay the initial version of the so-called Victory Program.

According to the projections of the joint chiefs of staff, the total size of the army by 1 July 1943—when the ground and air forces would be ready "for final, decisive modern combat operations"—was to be about 8.8 million men, or approximately 215 divisions. Additionally, the army was to consist predominantly of air, tank, and motorized formations.[18]

Of the 8.8 million men in the army, around 2 million were to be assigned to the air force, in which 239 air wings (about 63,500 aircraft) were to be created.

The initial calculations and plans were repeatedly revised and adjusted as U.S. political goals and strategic missions became more precise. Nevertheless, they served as a basis for the quite rapid deployment of the American armed forces,

particularly after U.S. entry into the war. The size of the ground forces on 1 January 1941 was over 1.6 million men; by the end of 1942, it had risen to almost 5.4 million men. By 1 July 1943 the army had 8.3 million men.[19] In 1942 the air force numbered 5,042 combat aircraft, including 2,308 heavy bombers. In 1942–1944, 9 new air armies were organized, including 4 strategic aviation armies. By the end of the war the U.S. had 17 air armies.

Thus, the U.S., although with a great delay, still very energetically carried out the mobilization deployment of its armed forces, succeeding during the war in creating a large army and a powerful air force.

2. The Strategic Concentration and Deployment of the Armed Forces in the Theaters of Operations

An analysis of the history of war, particularly of the world wars, shows that historically two principal methods of carrying out strategic concentration and deployment of armed forces in theaters of operations developed.

The first of them consisted in concentrating and deploying forces with great speed and in limited periods simultaneously along an entire front, openly and even after the start of war. This was the method typically used by nations during World War I, fully conforming, as it did, to the political aspirations and established military theory views of the powers in both coalitions. Although the belligerents tried in peacetime to put into effect as many measures as possible that previously had been carried out only with a declaration of war, the strategic concentration and deployment of forces in the theaters of operations took place after the start of the war.

Preparing to enter World War II, a number of nations characteristically carried out the concentration and deployment of their forces in peacetime. Moreover, concentration was carried out in strict secrecy and lasted an extended time. On the other hand, the deployment of forces in starting areas and the creation of starting groupings for an offensive or defensive were carried out in brief periods, immediately before the start of combat operations.

This constituted the basic content of the second method of strategic concentration and deployment of forces in theaters of operations.

The nations that had been unable to carry out the concentration and deployment of their main forces in peacetime fell into a difficult situation. During the first days they could not resist the enemy on the axes of its main attacks with sufficiently strong troop groupings, and at the start of war they were unable to repel the enemy's surprise massed attacks from the air or to resist a deep invasion by enemy ground forces into friendly territory. This greatly complicated

completing the strategic deployment of the armed forces, since it had to be carried out simultaneously with intense defensive battles.

The Strategic Concentration and Deployment of the Armed Forces of the Fascist Bloc

Germany. The methods of carrying out strategic concentration and deployment of the fascist German army were based on the concepts of blitzkrieg and total war, proceeding from which the Hitlerite military and political leadership planned the consecutive defeat of its enemies in brief, blitzkrieg campaigns. In accord with this, strategic concentration and deployment of the main mass of the armed forces was carried out in sequence against one enemy after another.*

The fascist German command's desire to achieve the principal goals of the war during the first strategic operations made it necessary to concentrate its forces' main efforts on making the first powerful attack. This required concentrating the overwhelming mass of the armed forces in the first strategic echelon and allocating very limited forces to the strategic reserve.

The Hitlerite leadership's reliance on surprise attack gave rise to the desire to preempt the enemy in concentrating and deploying its forces and to carry out these measures in a concealed manner.

The concentration and deployment of fascist German forces in preparing for the attack on Poland began at the end of June 1939, 2 months before the start of the war. Infantry divisions were moved into concentration areas gradually, under the pretext of participating in maneuvers and performing engineer work to build border fortifications.

At the same time, in the central regions of Germany, also under the pretext of participating in maneuvers, the concentration of tank and motorized formations was carried out. The selection for these formations of concentration areas so distant from the Polish border pursued a dual aim: first, to conceal from the enemy the very fact of concentration, and, second, to make it easier on the forces to make an organized departure from the concentration areas directly to the starting areas for the invasion.

The concentration and deployment of forces in East Prussia started on 6 August under the pretext of preparing to celebrate the 25th anniversary of the victory of the German army at Tannenberg. Part of the forces were shifted to East Prussia from central Germany by sea, while the main forces were being deployed in place when the general concealed mobilization was announced on 16 August.

*At the same time, to accomplish intermediate or auxiliary strategic missions, part of the forces were deployed in other theaters; in the spring of 1940, in northern Europe for the capture of Denmark and Norway, and in the spring of 1941, in the Balkans for operations against Greece and Yugoslavia. Author's note

By 25 August, because of the fascist German command's efforts, 29 of the 58 formations assigned for operations against Poland were in the concentration areas or already in the starting areas for the offensive.

Concentration and deployment were then carried out in parallel with the general concealed mobilization. By the morning of 1 September, 43 formations—most of the main forces of the invasion troops—had already been deployed.

For the attack on Poland, fascist Germany had concentrated 53 divisions (including 6 tank and 4 motorized divisions) numbering over 1.5 million men, 2,800 tanks, and about 2,000 combat aircraft (see table 7). The main forces (37 divisions, including 4 tank) were deployed in Silesia and the western part of Czechoslovakia, the starting point for the main attack.

During the preparation period for the Polish campaign the Hitlerite command deployed a covering army along the western borders with France, Luxembourg, and Belgium. Here, in mid-August, under the pretext of participating in building defensive works, one regiment each was dispatched from most of the peacetime divisions that had been planned for deployment there. Concentration and deployment of the covering army were completed during the general concealed mobilization.

The forces concentrated in the west at the time numbered 33 divisions.[20]

For the invasion of France the concentration and deployment of the main forces of the fascist German army took place under the conditions of a war already under way, but at a time of no active combat operations in the land theater. The unique conditions of the "phony war" made it possible for the Hitlerite leadership first to concentrate and then to deploy against France a powerful strategic troop grouping without any interference from the enemy, and to make the first attack against it with enormous force.

The process of creating the fascist German strategic grouping lasted more than 8 months. It included several drawn-out stages.

The first stage (from mid-August until the start of September 1939) consisted of the deployment of the covering forces on the German-French border during the preparations and conduct of the Polish campaign. The second stage, which lasted about 6 weeks (October and the first half of November), encompassed the regrouping of the main forces from the east to the west after completion of the Polish campaign. In the third stage, from the end of 1939 until the start of 1940, an additional mobilization and the organization of new formations were carried out, as was movement of the forces up to the assembly areas. Characteristically, in this stage the main forces were deployed on a false axis toward northern Belgium, where an auxiliary attack was to be made. The fourth stage, which came in the spring of 1940, included the concealed regrouping

Table 7. Army Groupings of Fascist Germany for Conducting Initial Operations.[21]

	Name of army group	Width of deployment area, km	Number		Number of Divisions				Average number of km per division
			Field armies	Tank groups	Infantry	Tank	Motorized and light	Total	
Fascist German aggression against Poland (1 Sep 1939)	North	340	2	—	16	2	2	20	17
	South	360	3	2	22	4	6 2/3	32 2/3	11
	Supreme High Command Reserve	—	—	—	1/3	—	—	1/3	—
	Total:	700	5	2	43	6	8	57	14
Fascist German military campaign in Western Europe (10 May 1940)	B	400	2	—	24	3	2 1/3*	29 1/3*	17
	A	170	3	1	35	7	3 1/3*	45 1/3*	4
	C**	350	2	—	19	—	—	19	18.5
	Supreme High Command Reserve	—	—	—	41	—	1 and one brigade	42 and one brigade	
	Total:	920	7	1	119	10	6 2/3 and one brigade	135 2/3 and one brigade	6.8

*1/3—separate regiments.

**Army group C deployed along the Maginot line and at the start of the active missions.

of the forces from the north to the Ardennes region, the point from which the fascist command was preparing to make the main attack.

The total composition of the strategic grouping of the fascist German forces concentrated and deployed by the start of the offensive in the west numbered 136 divisions, including 10 tank and 7 motorized (see table 7). They were equipped with about 2,600 tanks and over 3,800 aircraft. The size of the army deployed on the Western Front reached 3.3 million men. The main mass of forces was concentrated on the axis of the main attack in an area 170 km wide.

Forty-two divisions and brigades were left in the supreme high command reserve.

The strategic deployment of fascist German naval forces against the western powers and their allies was determined in advance by the plan to concentrate the navy's main efforts in the struggle against English naval forces and allied merchant shipping on the open seas and oceans. Very limited naval forces took part in joint operations with ground forces on the European continent. More or less major naval forces were used only in carrying out the Norwegian operation, and they accomplished important missions in moving troops to the Scandinavian Peninsula, landing amphibious assault forces in Norwegian ports, and supporting and covering their operations from the sea.

Ten days before the attack on Poland the fascist German command sent two of its heavy cruisers, the *Deutschland* and the *Admiral Speer*, into the Atlantic with the intention that by the start of war they would have passed the line of the English blockade. Two special vessels were sent out to supply these ships with fuel and provisions at sea.

From 19 through 29 August, in the Atlantic Ocean (on the western approaches to England) and in the North Sea, 39 German submarines were deployed, ready immediately at the start of war to attack English ships.[22] All German merchant vessels overseas were instructed to leave foreign ports quickly and head to ports in Germany.

On 22 August, more than a week before the start of the war, the German battleship *Schleswig-Holstein* arrived at the port of Danzig, purportedly by invitation of the senate of the "Free City," and on the following day the Danzig fascists seized power in the city. Several light cruisers and destroyers, 7 small submarines, and a fleet of minesweepers entered Danzig Bay after the *Schleswig-Holstein*. Later the old battleship *Schlesien* also arrived here.[23] All these ships were assigned to destroy the Polish navy and to assist ground forces in capturing Polish bases and the coast of Danzig Bay.

Fascist Germany thus carried out the strategic concentration and deployment of its armed forces in the theaters of operations in accord with the initial military theory concepts and strategic plans. The concentration was carried out secretly and gradually, over relatively extended periods. Additionally, the more important the enemy, the larger the forces used for the invasion and the longer the period of concentration: 2 months before the attack on Poland, and more than 8 months before the invasion of France. In the final stage the concentration of forces practically merged with actual deployment. But in every instance the forces occupied their starting positions quickly in brief periods immediately before invasion.

Japan. The Japanese command intended to carry out the strategic concentration and deployment of its armed forces following the same provisions of military

theory that had guided the fascist German command. So, to achieve a surprise first attack and seize the strategic initiative from the start of the war, the Japanese command, like the Hitlerite leadership, shifted all the measures for strategic concentration and deployment to the prewar period.

The concentration of the Japanese armed forces on the eve of the war was carried out in accord with the strategic plan and was adapted to the existing strategic and operational axes, on which Japan had advantageous forward bases and staging areas.

From bases on Taiwan and the Palau Islands, Japan was able to develop the offensive against the Philippines, and then against the Dutch East Indies. From bases and staging areas on Hainan, in south China, and in south Indochina, Japan moved against Malaya, Thailand, and Burma. The Truk Islands, and the bases there, made possible Japan's control of a large part of the central and south Pacific. On the Kurile Islands there were also bases, which made possible the conduct of operations on the northern axis. By the start of December the main forces of the first strategic echelon of the Japanese ground forces, aviation, and navy assigned to the initial operations had been deployed at all these forward bases and staging areas.[24]

The deployment of Japan's main forces for conducting the first operations started on 27 November, when a carrier strike force left Hitokappu Bay (Etorufu Island) to attack Pearl Harbor. On 4 December two troop convoys left the island of Hainan and headed toward Malaya and south Thailand. On 6 December the Malayan Task Force put to sea from Taiwan. On the same day, the forward detachments of the 14th Army assigned to capture airfields in the Philippines began to leave Taiwan and the Penghuliehtao Islands, while the invasion forces for the island of Guam began to leave the Palau Islands. The remaining forces at this time were in the starting areas ready at the first signal to begin the offensive.

Thus, the Japanese military command, like the leadership of fascist Germany, was able to carry out a strategic concentration and deployment of its armed forces before the start of combat operations. Additionally, the Japanese military leadership selected those strategic and operational axes on which there were already bases and staging areas for conducting the first operations.

Specific Features of the Concentration and Deployment of the Main Forces of the Polish and French Armies

The specific traits in the strategic concentration and deployment of the Polish and French armed forces were determined by the anti-Soviet tendency in the foreign policy of the western powers and by the defensive character of the strategic goals underlying Polish and French plans for conducting the war in its initial stage.

The strategic concentration and deployment of the Polish army. The Polish government, despite the threat of fascist aggression that could be seen quite clearly in the spring of 1939, was more prepared for war against the USSR than for war against Germany.* Of course, this also explained the Polish government's extreme slowness in carrying out defensive measures on the western borders and its delay in conducting a strategic deployment of forces against fascist Germany.

The first, very timid measures to provide cover for the western borders were carried out in March 1939.† However, during the following 5 months the Polish government, holding to its anti-Soviet positions, did not undertake any substantial measures to strengthen the troop grouping on the Polish-German border.

The main troop regroupings provided for by the strategic deployment plan were not begun until 26 August, a week before the start of the war. On this day, the order was given to move up the fully mobilized formations to the designated concentration areas. But the order for the armies and operations groups of the first echelon to occupy the starting position was not given until 30 August.

The Polish military command fell into an exceptionally difficult situation. In an extremely limited period it had to carry out the concentration and deployment of its troop formations and the occupation of the starting areas and defensive positions at the same time that it was conducting the complete mobilization of its forces, which was still unfinished. These difficulties were aggravated because many formations had to be moved from the eastern regions to the western borders, meaning that rail transport had to be organized across the entire country at distances of 500 to 800 km.

The delay in the start of the concentration and deployment of the forces and the complexity of the conditions under which this was carried out led to a situation where the Polish command, by the start of combat operations, had been unable to complete the creation of the strategic grouping of its armed forces called for in the plan.

For the war against Germany, Poland fielded 57 formations, including 30 regular and 9 reserve infantry divisions, 5 infantry, 2 armored, and 11 cavalry brigades, and approximately 400 aircraft and 220 light tanks.

*Almost until the last days before the start of war, more than one-half the Polish army's formations were still in the country's eastern regions and were aimed against the USSR. Thus, in the regions to the west of Warsaw, including the capital garrison, some 22 formations were quartered, including 13 regular and 4 reserve infantry divisions, 4 cavalry brigades, and 1 motorized tank brigade. At the same time, in the country's eastern regions there were 30 formations, including 17 regular and 5 reserve infantry divisions, 7 cavalry brigades, and 1 motorized tank brigade (see Proektor, p. 38).

†After partial mobilization started on 23 March, the process began of moving a number of formations into the border regions to cover the further mobilization deployment of the armed forces. In particular, the fully mobilized 20th Infantry Division was moved up to the southwest of Piotrkow, and the Nowogrodek Cavalry Brigade moved to the north of Plock. Author's note

By the time of the attack by fascist Germany, only 24 of 47 formations had completed concentration, and far from all of these had been able to occupy the designated starting positions. The remaining 23 formations at this time continued to advance to the concentration and deployment areas. However, massed attacks by German aviation against the railroads on the first and subsequent days of the war seriously impeded completion of the concentration and deployment of these formations. Thus, during the border engagement from 1 through 5 September, 18 formations and independent units were in movement. Of them, 10 arrived at their destinations at the set time, 3 were late, and 4 did not arrive at all or were forced to change their unloading stations.[25] Although most formations and units (around 70 percent) took up the designated areas, they went into battle from a march formation and were soundly defeated.

The great delay of the Polish government and military command in the strategic concentration and deployment of their forces, which was carried out, moreover, very hurriedly and partially under enemy attack, was one of the main reasons for the rapid collapse of the Polish bourgeois-landowner state.

The strategic concentration and deployment of the French army and the English expeditionary corps were carred out in full accord with the Anglo-French plan for war against fascist Germany. The main forces of the allied troops were concentrated on the left wing of the Northeastern Front, where the main enemy attack was expected. In addition, while on the right wing of this front, to the south of Longwy, the French armies were deployed on lines in direct proximity to the enemy, on the left wing of the front, along the Franco–German border—on the axis where the main enemy attack was expected—both French and English forces were deployed, in effect, in the assembly areas along the Franco-Belgian border. The movement of the forces to the main deployment line along the Dyle River was provided for only after the invasion of Belgium and Holland by fascist German forces.

The French high command had begun to carry out measures to concentrate forces toward the eastern borders of France long before the start of the war. As the danger increased, the intensity of these measures grew steadily. However, they did not assume an all-encompassing character until the last 10 days before the declaration of war.

One of the first measures undertaken in this 10–day period was to deploy and bring to combat readiness the air defense forces. On 21 August the command was given to move the air defense weapons to the designated regions. After this, on 23 August, the order was given to deploy and bring the entire air defense system to combat readiness. On these same days the covering forces began to regroup and move up to the deployment lines. Additionally, regular divisions of the first echelon of the covering forces were transported in motor vehicles directly to the border and brought to combat readiness. On 24 August the regular

divisions of the second covering echelons were brought to combat readiness and began to advance to the border.

On 26 August the forces received a directive from the high command to put into effect on 27 August the plan of "universal cover." This meant deploying and bringing to combat readiness the forces of the first strategic echelon to conduct the initial defensive operations. In accord with this directive, up to 50 divisions were put on alert. At the same time, there were intensive troop movements to the concentration areas from the interior districts.

During the last 10 days before the declaration of war, the concealed deployment of the English, Belgian, and Dutch armed forces began. On 23 August the English command carried out a partial mobilization to bring up to strength the formations to be sent to the continent. On 25 August the forward units of the fully mobilized formations began to land at Dunkirk.

On 26 August partial mobilizations started in Holland and Belgium. By 1 September Belgium had been able to completely mobilize only its peacetime army.

By the time of the declaration of war by England and France against fascist Germany, the strategic deployment of the allied armed forces was not yet complete. In particular, only the first two divisions of the English expeditionary corps had completed concentration in the assigned area by this time.* The deployment of the Belgian and Dutch armies had not been completed. However, the main mass of French forces had been brought up to the starting areas and had an opportunity to enter the defensive engagement in a quite organized manner.

By the start of war France had deployed 110 divisions. Of them, 85 to 86 divisions were concentrated in the northeast of France opposite Germany, 10 on the border with Italy, and the remainder in French colonial possessions (the balance of forces at the start of September on the Western Front, not counting the Belgian and Dutch forces, can be seen in table 8).

Table 8. Balance of Forces on the Western Front (Start of September 1939).[26]

Formations and types of weapons	France	Germany
Divisions	85	31
Tanks	2,200	
Aircraft	1,400-1,500*	700-800
Guns	6,000-7,000	3,000

*This included 400 English aircraft to be transferred to France.

*By January 1940, 5 English divisions had been shifted to the continent, and 10 by May. Author's note.

Taking the 20 Belgian and 10 Dutch divisions deployed into consideration, the enormous superiority that the allied forces had over the fascist German army at this time becomes evident.

Most of the fascist German forces at this time were on the Eastern Front ready for aggression against Poland. Their shift to the Western Front could have drastically altered this balance. But, in the first place, fascist Germany, on the eve of the invasion of Poland, would hardly have decided on such a step, and, second, a comparison between all the forces of fascist Germany and the combined allied forces deployed by 1 September still gave superiority to the allied forces (see table 9).

Table 9. Overall Balance of Forces of Germany and the Western Powers on 1 September 1939.[27]

Men and Equipment	Germany	Allies (France, England, Poland)
Divisions	103	147
Tanks	3,200	4,100
Aircraft	2,500	3,960
Guns (all calibers)	10,260	12,200

The allied command, however, did not want to make use either of the favorable strategic situation or of its advantage in men and equipment to defeat the aggressor. After the official declaration of war with fascist Germany on 3 September 1939, it began the "phony war," which contradicted all concepts on the character of combat operations in the initial period and all military doctrines held by the war's participants. Confronted with the policy requirements of the ruling circles in the allied powers, considerations of an operational-strategic character moved to the background.

By the start of the German offensive in May 1940 the allied command had completed the deployment of its armed forces. The divisions fully mobilized by this time were deployed in four theaters: 108 divisions were in the northern part of Europe,opposite Germany (Northeastern Front); 7 divisions were in the southern part of Europe opposite Italy (Southeastern Front); 8 divisions were in North Africa and 3 were in the Near East. Three divisions were in Norway.

The forces of the main Northwestern Front deployed from Switzerland to the Belgian border were combined in three army groups.

The 1st Army Group (the 2nd, 9th, and 1st French armies, the English army, and the French 7th Army) consisted of 41 divisions (including 9 English) and was deployed from the southern border with Luxembourg to the North Sea coast near Dunkirk.

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The 2nd Army Group (the 3rd, 4th, and 5th French armies), with 39 divisions, occupied the front along the Maginot Line to the region south of Strasbourg.

The 3rd Army Group (the French 8th Army and an independent army corps) consisted of 11 divisions behind the Maginot Line up to the Swiss border.

The reserves of the high command consisted of 23 divisions. They were deployed on a broad front in the defensive areas of the army groups: 5 divisions were assigned to support the 1st Army Group, and 12 to support the 2nd and 3rd. The reserves for reinforcing the army groups were actually included in these groups, and only a very weak reserve of 6 divisions remained at the immediate disposal of headquarters. Thus, the main strategic reserves were scattered between the army groups.

As the combat operations that unfolded showed, such a troop grouping did not suit the existing situation, and the scattering of the reserves greatly complicated the strategic regrouping of the forces in the first defensive engagements.

The Strategic Concentration and Deployment of the English and U.S. Armed Forces

On the eve of and at the start of the war the main attention of England and the U.S., as major sea powers, was focused on the strategic deployment of their navies and the transfer of their ground forces to the starting areas on the coasts of the continents and islands in the zone of the planned military operations.

The strategic deployment of the English armed forces took place in a complicated situation. The immediate danger that hung over England from the fascist nations of Germany and Italy required a concentration of efforts by the army and navy primarily on the European continent and in the basins of the Atlantic Ocean and the North and Mediterranean seas. Along with this, Japan presented a growing threat to English possessions in the Pacific.

At the end of August 1939, under a plan worked out previously, the English command began to organize an expeditionary army and started to move it to the continent for joint operations with the French armed forces. At the same time, a combat deployment of the home fleet was begun. Since its starting positions, under the deployment plan, lay in direct proximity to the main bases, by 31 August all the ships were already deployed in wartime positions or were on their way. The navy's main forces were concentrated at Scapa Flow (Orkney Islands), including a squadron of ships of the line (5 battleships), a squadron of heavy cruisers (2 ships), an aircraft carrier, 3 cruiser squadrons (12 cruisers), 2 flotillas of destroyers (17 ships), and a flotilla of minesweepers (7 units). An aircraft carrier was based at Roseneath, a flotilla of submarines (10 units) at Dundee, a flotilla of submarines (6 units) at Blyth, and a cruiser squadron (2

cruisers) and a fleet of destroyers (9 units) at Humber. Two battleships, 2 aircraft carriers, 3 cruisers, and a flotilla of destroyers (9 ships) were at Portland.[28]

On 27 August the English government brought all its air defense forces to full combat readiness. By the start of the war antiaircraft artillery, searchlights, and barrage balloons had taken up firing positions in the designated regions; fighter aviation was on alert on the ground and in the air, while the air observation, warning, and communications service was operating around the clock.

Thus, by the start of the war in Europe, the main part of the English armed forces, the home fleet, and the air defense forces had been deployed and brought to combat readiness.

In July 1940 the English chiefs of staff concluded that in a Japanese attack on Hong Kong and British Borneo, English forces would be unable to stop the enemy. For this reason it was decided first of all to strengthen the defenses of Malaya. In 1940–1941 the English command shifted part of its ground forces and aviation there. In November 1941 the battleship *Prince of Wales* and the heavy cruiser *Repulse* were sent to Singapore. However, England could not shift to the Far East major forces of its ground troops, aviation, and fleet, since they were tied down by military operations in Africa, the Mediterranean, and the Atlantic, and also because some of these forces were kept close to home for a possible landing by German forces on English territory. The threat of such a landing was not eliminated until June 1941.

The English government was clearly experiencing a shortage of naval forces and aviation to defend its possessions in the Pacific. For this reason the government considered it best to concentrate its main forces to hold key positions, such as Singapore and Hong Kong, and to try to safeguard its lines of communications to these bases until the possibility arose to go over to a counteroffensive.

After the well-known Anglo-American staff conference in Washington at the start of 1941, the transfer of English ground forces, aviation, and naval ships to the Far East was carried out under the agreement reached at this conference.

The unique strategic deployment of U.S. armed forces was to a certain degree determined in advance because, at the outbreak of war in Europe, the U.S. formally held a position of neutrality. For example, the U.S. did not intervene in the war between Japan and China, although it provided great help to China with deliveries of military equipment and weapons. Considering that the war in Europe had already started, and foreseeing the inevitable entry into an armed clash with both Germany and Japan, the U.S. was making great efforts to prepare its economy and armed forces for war. Much attention was devoted to the production of weapons for the ground forces.

In the U.S. during the first 9 months of 1941 the output of light tanks increased by a factor of 6, medium tanks by a factor of 5, automatic rifles by a factor of 2, and armored vehicles by a factor of more than 2. There was a sharp increase in the aircraft production program. The aviation industry had orders from the war department for 80,000 aircraft.[29] Naval construction expanded tremendously. By the start of 1940 contracts had been concluded for the construction of 2,831 ships, and in October 346 warships had been commissioned and 345 were under construction. In addition, 323 auxiliary vessels had been launched. By 1 October, of the 10,070 aircraft ordered for the U.S. navy, 4,535 had already been built.[30]

The training of personnel for the army and navy was carried out rapidly, and particularly intensely for the air corps. From July through October 1941 the number of officers in the air corps rose from 11,000 to 17,000, the number of candidates in the flight schools increased from 9,000 to 10,000, and the number of enlisted air specialists grew from 127,000 to 180,000. In October a plan was approved to increase the number of personnel in the American air force (not including naval aviation personnel) to 41,000 officers and 600,000 enlisted men.[31]

There were 5,823 pilots serving in naval aviation. Approximately the same number of pilots was being trained in the navy's flight schools.[32]

According to the calculations of the army and navy staffs, of the nearly 8.8 million men (approximately 215 divisions) called for in the army's Victory Program, 5 million were to be sent overseas.[33]

By August 1941 the U.S. had 29 infantry, 4 armored, and 2 cavalry divisions as well as tactical aviation consisting of almost 200 squadrons and nearly 175,000 personnel. The regular army, its reserves, the national guard, and the new contingents called up into the army under the draft numbered around 1.6 million men.[34]

According to the Rainbow-5 plan, during the first months of the war the American command intended to move 666 aircraft and 220,900 men to overseas garrisons, including 44,000 to Hawaii, 23,000 to Alaska, 13,400 to Panama, 45,800 to the Caribbean zone, and 26,500 to Iceland. By 1 November 1941 several thousand soldiers were to be sent to the British Isles to work with air defense units. By 1 February 1942, 53,200 men from bomber aviation were to be shifted to Britain as well.

To defend South America in the event of war, men and materiel were to be deployed as follows: 24,000 men and 80 aircraft on its western coast, 86,000 men and 56 aircraft on the eastern coast. In the U.S. an expeditionary army was being readied for combat operations (2 corps and 10 divisions). It was to be sent overseas 180 days after the start of mobilization.[35]

Initially the American command did not plan to strengthen the defense of the Philippines, feeling that in a Japanese attack these islands could not be held. However, this view changed later. The decision was made to reinforce the defense of the Philippines. In July 1941, by a presidential decision, an army group under the command of General MacArthur was created in the Philippines. This group included the American forces and the Philippine army. Immediately after that, 425 reserve officers, field and antiaircraft artillery, tanks, and ammunition were sent to the Philippines.[36] Even before the Japanese attack, the U.S. had been able to shift large bomber and fighter aviation forces to the Philippines. At the end of November and the start of December 1941 six transports were dispatched with around 9,000 soldiers and officers, aviation and artillery equipment, tanks and ammunition. However, these transports did not succeed in reaching the Philippines.[37]

At the start of December 1941 the commander of the English squadron and the commander of the U.S. Asiatic Fleet, with the consent of their governments, decided to divide all the available naval forces into three groups: 1) a British group of ships of the line in Singapore (a battleship, a heavy cruiser, and two old battleships), reinforced with a Dutch cruiser and Dutch and American destroyers, was given the mission to obstruct Japanese shipping operations in the South China Sea and around the Dutch East Indies; 2) a squadron of cruisers (one British, one Dutch, two American, and four American destroyers) were to operate in the triangle of North Borneo—Surabaja—Port Darwin as convoy escorts; 3) a group of British heavy and light cruisers and five auxiliary cruisers were to protect shipping in the Indian Ocean. These three groups were to cooperate with the U.S. Pacific Fleet.[38]

To this it must be added that the American squadron that had left for Hawaii in April 1940 for annual exercises was left in Hawaii for special assignment instead of returning to ports on the U.S. west coast, as usually had been done.[39]

The deployment of the U.S., English, and Dutch armed forces in the Pacific and Far East was of a coalition character. But, while Japan had been able to carry out the strategic concentration and deployment of its armed forces on selected axes before the start of operations, these countries, by the start of war in the Pacific, had been able to carry out only part of the planned measures. They were late in the strategic concentration and deployment of their armed forces and were poorly prepared to conduct a strategic defense.

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The strategic deployment of the armed forces of the capitalist nations Germany, Japan, Poland, France, England, and the U.S.—on the eve of and at the start of World War II showed that in the end the methods used emerged from the policies of the ruling circles in these nations and from the military and political goals that they had set for themselves in the armed conflict. These

methods were directly dependent on the specific theaters of operations and on the specific features of the various military theory concepts and military doctrines on which plans for the war and its initial operations were based.

In the development of the art of war, general trends that had been progressing since wars of the remote past were enriched with solid new content. For example, in the set of measures employed by governments, such as the strategic deployment of their armed forces, the new element in the evolution of these trends was that, in the fascist bloc of nations, the strategic deployment of the armed forces was actually shifted to the prewar period. Although the powers subjected to attack did in fact take steps toward strategic deployment even before war began, they were usually late in completing deployment. As a result, adversaries entered into war on unequal footing, and the aggressor unquestionably had considerable advantages. These advantages were not fatal, however, as World War II showed.

On the eve of and at the start of World War II mobilization took on a new character, essentially becoming universal. It embraced the economic sphere, the morale and political state of the population, government control, and so forth. Military mobilization itself had the leading role in the system of mobilization measures.

In most nations paramount importance was attached to reducing the time needed for mobilization measures and to ensuring their concealment. The following methods of accomplishing these extremely important missions were typical in World War II:

—peacetime retention of a certain number of formations at near-wartime levels;

—peacetime retention of a large number of formations at an organizational level that made it possible to easily raise them to wartime levels under the guise of exercises;

—designation of formation areas permitting minimum transport of troops and the creation of mobilization reserves near the formation sites;

—inclusion of paramilitary organizations in the general system of mobilization preparations;

—systematic conduct of mobilization exercises and training sessions and the maintenance of government and military control organs in constant mobilization readiness.

The chief advantage of concealed mobilization was that it created the possibility to preempt the enemy in strategic concentration and deployment of the forces, thus creating the conditions for making a surprise first attack or for a high level of readiness to repel one.

Methods of strategic concentration and deployment of armed forces in a theater of operations took on new features. While in World War I the concentration of forces was carried out rapidly (taking from 2 to 3 weeks) after the declaration of war and after general mobilization, in preparing for World War II a number of nations began concentration long before war started and carried it out secretly and at a reduced rate without disrupting peacetime transportation schedules. The tempo picked up, however, as the start of military operations approached. The final stage of concentration merged with the deployment of forces, which at an increasing rate turned into extremely important deployment operations such as the occupation of initial positions by certain groupings to prepare for defense or to go over to the offensive. War experience showed that precisely such operations opened up the possibility to preempt the enemy at the start of combat operations or, in any event, to avoid lagging behind the enemy in troop deployment.

On the eve of and at the start of World War II an increased role was played by measures designed to cover the strategic deployment of the armed forces, including their mobilization, concentration in theaters of operations, occupation of initial positions, and so forth. Entire armies, instead of independent infantry detachments and large cavalry formations, were assigned to cover the forces. These armies included tank and mechanized formations deployed near the borders before war began. Air force units and troop air defense and national air defense units were essentially used for the same purpose.

Notes

1. Muller-Hillebrand, I, 73, 81, 166-178, 180-183.
2. See *Nyurnbergskiy protsess* [The Nuremberg Trial: A Collection of Materials], 2nd ed. (Moscow: Gosyurizdat, 1954), I, 316.
3. *Journal of Military History*, 1959, No. 9, p. 100.
4. See Muller-Hillebrand, I, 59-61.
5. See Proektor, p. 27.
6. Data from Muller-Hillebrand, I, 73-82; II, 10-23.
7. See Hattori Tokushiro, *Yaponiya v voyne 1941-1945 gg.* [Japan in the War 1941-1945] (Moscow: Voyenizdat, 1973), p. 86. [Hereafter cited as Tokushiro.—U.S. Ed.]
8. Tokushiro, p. 98.
9. See *Yaponskiy militarizm* [Japanese Militarism] (Moscow: Izdatel'stvo "Nauka," 1972), p. 228.
10. See Tokushiro, p. 86.
11. Ibid., p. 103.
12. See J. B. Cohen, *Voyennaya ekonomika Yaponii* [The Military Economy of Japan] (Moscow: Izdatel'stvo inostrannoy literatury, 1951), p. 291.

13. All data on mobilization plan from *Istoriya voyennogo dela v Pol'she* [A History of Military Affairs in Poland] (Warsaw: Izdatel'stvo ministerstva natsional'noy oborony PNR, 1970), pp. 283-284.
14. See Butler, p. 46.
15. Ibid., pp. 53-58.
16. Ibid., pp. 47-53.
17. See *Morskoy atlas* [*Marine Atlas*] (Moscow: Izdatel'stvo Glavnogo shtaba VMF, 1963), III, Pt. 2, folio 30. [Hereafter cited as *Marine Atlas*—U.S. Ed.]
18. See Matloff and Snell, pp. 79-82.
19. Ibid., pp. 402-405.
20. See Muller-Hillebrand, II, 14-15, 21-22.
21. Data from Muller-Hillebrand, II, 14-15, 54-55.
22. See Roskill, p. 41.
23. See V. A. Belli and K. V. Pensin, *Boyevyye deystviya v Atlantike i na Sredizemnom more 1939-1945 gg.* [Military Operations in the Atlantic and Mediterranean 1939-1945] (Moscow: Voyenizdat, 1967), p. 49.
24. See S. Hayashi, *The Japanese Army in World War II*, p. 555.
25. Data from Proektor, p. 80; *Istoriya voyennogo dela v Pol'she*, pp. 286-287.
26. See V. I. Dashichev, *Bankrotstvo strategii germanskogo fashizma* [The Bankruptcy of Fascist German Strategy] (Moscow: Izdatel'stvo "Nauka," 1973), I, 348.
27. Ibid., p. 349.
28. See Roskill, pp. 24-26.
29. See *Pravda*, 9 and 26 Oct. 1941.
30. See G. N. Sevost'yanov, *Podgotovka voyny na Tikhom okeane* [Preparations for War in the Pacific] (Moscow: Izdatel'stvo AN SSSR, 1962), pp. 487, 488.
31. See *Pravda*, 3 Dec. 1941.
32. Ibid., 4 Nov. 1941.
33. See Matloff and Snell, p. 80.
34. Ibid., p. 68.
35. Ibid., p. 65.
36. Ibid., p. 88.
37. Ibid., p. 94.
38. See Butler and Gwyer, p. 214.
39. See Matloff and Snell, p. 28.

Chapter 6. The Concealment of Aggression in Europe and the Pacific

Preparing for a world war to repartition the world and spheres of influence and to establish global supremacy, fascist Germany and militarist Japan attached exceptional importance to political and operational-strategic concealment of their acts of aggression. Adopting theories of total and blitzkrieg warfare and placing the main emphasis in their strategic plans on the surprise of attack, the political and military leaders of these nations attempted to securely conceal their true political goals and plans. In each specific situation they attempted to mislead the governments and peoples of the nations designated as the victims of their aggression and to destroy their victims' capacity for organized resistance. In their expansionist aspirations the political and military leaders of the aggressor nations resorted to political treachery and violations of standards of international law.

The entire long and complicated system of measures employed to conceal acts of aggression focused on achieving surprise in the first attack against the enemy. To accomplish this cardinal mission the governments of the aggressor nations used every possible method to bring their influence to bear on the enemy. All of the government and military control organs and all of the mass media were used for this purpose.

1. Political Concealment of Aggression

The governments of fascist Germany and militarist Japan, preparing their nations and armed forces for a surprise attack against one country or another, assigned a primary role to the political concealment of aggression. This was carried out according to carefully elaborated plans that contained coordinated political, diplomatic, and military strategic measures to deceive and confuse the enemy and to undermine its ability to resist aggression. For example, to deceive foreign governments and populations, provision was made for broad diplomatic maneuvers, spurious concentrations and troop movements from one theater of operations to another, and so forth. Ultimately, these helped to create favorable conditions for a surprise invasion of enemy territory and the defeat of enemy armed forces in the first operations.

Political concealment of fascist German aggression against Poland. The Hitlerite leadership was fully engaged in concealing aggression against Poland in the autumn of 1938 when it artificially created the so-called Danzig crisis.

"Danzig should be German"—under this slogan the fascist German clique began a political and diplomatic offensive against the Polish government. In the first half of 1939 Hitler repeatedly made provocative speeches against Poland, pouring oil on the fire of already tense German-Polish relations. This caused diplomatic maneuvering by Poland's allies, France and England, which was precisely what Hitler had counted on. Extensive talks began on a peaceful settlement of the German-Polish conflict. They continued right up until the invasion of Poland by fascist German forces. During these talks the Hitlerite government supported in every possible way the illusions of the Polish, French, and English governments on the possibility of a peaceful settlement of the differences that had arisen.

The Danzig crisis, artificially created, allowed the fascist German command, behind a smokescreen of diplomatic ballyhoo, to prepare the previously planned invasion of Poland.

The Polish government, observing the gradual buildup of German armed forces along its borders, was for a long time confronted with a dilemma: would fascist Germany launch an armed attack on the country, or would it limit itself merely to threatening to attack to obtain certain political or territorial compensations? And what should be done: deploy Poland's armed forces, which could aggravate the situation still further, or delay mobilization until the completion of diplomatic talks? While the Polish leaders, who were more inclined to deploy the army but were restrained by their western allies, were vacillating, the Hitlerite leadership, fully determined to attack Poland, completed the deployment of its armed forces and selected the suitable moment to make a powerful attack against its victim.

The diplomatic talks organized between fascist Germany and Poland's western allies pursued an additional goal: to keep England and France from intervening in the German-Polish conflict, at least for the period needed to conduct the initial operation in Poland. In other words, for the period during which the fascist German command hoped to deliver a decisive defeat to the Polish armed forces.

The same goal was pursued by the diplomatic game with France and England started by the German government, with the mediation of Mussolini, literally on the eve of the invasion of Poland. Under the agreement between Hitler and Mussolini, on 31 August Italian Minister of Foreign Affairs Ciano transmitted to the English and French governments a proposal from Mussolini on calling a conference for the representatives of the four powers—Germany, Italy, England, and France—to discuss "the difficulties stemming from the Versailles Treaty," by which the territorial claims of German imperialism were understood. The conference was to be called on 5 September.

On September 1, the day of the German army's attack on Poland, the governments of the western powers, following their Munich policy and trying to reach a new compromise agreement with Hitler, started talks through Rome on the

conditions for calling the conference. On the following day, 2 September, Ciano's emissary in Paris informed French Minister of Foreign Affairs Bonnet that Hitler was not against discussing the conditions for calling the conference, but would agree to talks only if the English and French notes sent to him did not come as an ultimatum. He requested that the decision of the English and French governments be deferred until his answer at 1200 hours on the following day; however, if the notes from these governments came as an ultimatum, he would refuse the conference. This new diplomatic intrigue not only gained time, it provided fascist Germany with an opportunity to once again sound out the positions of western allies. Bonnet's reply, transmitted through Ciano, showed that the French note would not be an ultimatum, and that the western powers would agree to wait for Hitler's answer until 1200 hours on Sunday, 3 September

Thus, because of the diplomatic farce played out by a previously set plan, the German government was able to gain 3 days, during which the Polish army suffered a decisive defeat in a border engagement. During this diplomatic spectacle, it also became clear to Hitler that the western allies would not come to Poland's aid in the following days, and that the fascist German command could continue to increase its forces in the east.

The political concealment of fascist Germany's invasion of France, Belgium, and Holland. Political concealment of the war unleashed by fascist Germany in Western Europe was essentially the same as that employed in Poland, although the diplomatic and propaganda procedures were somewhat different.

At the bottom of the various political and propaganda moves that covered the Hitlerite leadership's active preparations to invade France lay the hope of using the anti-Soviet foreign policy of the western powers. This was a play on the anticommunist and anti-Soviet prejudices of the French and English leaders, who, after declaring war on fascist Germany after the attack on Poland, tried at the same time in every possible way to show Hitler that they were ready to settle their differences with Germany peacefully, if only he would extend his aggression further to the east against the USSR. Anticommunism and anti-Sovietism blinded the western leaders. Hitler and his government adroitly played on this, using, without a twinge of conscience, diplomatic channels and their propaganda apparatus to maintain and strengthen illusions on the supposedly peace-loving attitude of fascist Germany toward France and England.

Even before the war the Hitlerite leadership had started a noisy campaign for "eternal" German-French friendship, a campaign carried out under the banner of joining forces against the threat of communism. During the German-Polish war, the commotion over the "eternal" friendship somewhat abated, but then was resumed with new strength. It assumed particular scope after the Hitlerite government made the final decision to invade France.* The so-called peace

*The decision on preparing the offensive was made on 27 September 1939. Directive No. 6, on the elaboration of the Gelb plan, was dated 9 October of the same year. Author's note.

offensive against France and England, undertaken by the fascist German leadership in the autumn of 1939, was designed to lull the vigilance of the governments of these powers during the most crucial period of preparations for the invasion. Hitler in his speeches in the Reichstag on 19 September and 6 October 1939 stated that Germany had no claims against France, and from England expected only the return of the former German colonies. In September and October of the same year active contacts were maintained through various channels with English and French supporters of "friendship" with fascist Germany. Hitler's emissaries used these supporters to steadily instill the idea of the possibility of an "honorable peace" between Germany and France.

The psychological offensive of the Hitlerite leadership was also extended to the French army, and above all to the forces deployed in the forward positions. The "reticence of Germany to fight with France" was proclaimed in numerous fascist German propaganda slogans, in leaflets, in fraternization appeals transmitted by radio, and in every other possible way. Under the influence of at least three factors—the anticommunist and anti-Soviet hysteria fanned by reactionary forces with the help of fascist agents in France itself; the "phony war," which doomed the troops to extended idleness; and, finally, the fascist German propaganda—the French army gradually let down its vigilance against the aggressor and lost its combat capability.

In France these factors gave rise to an atmosphere of confusion, uncertainty, and an peculiar lassitude, all of which encompassed the various strata of French society. The Hitlerite military leadership made use of this too, gradually massing men and equipment on Germany's western borders to make a decisive attack on France, Belgium, and Holland. In the spring of 1940 the Germans were firmly convinced that their political deception and corrupting propaganda had prepared the ground to achieve surprise in conducting the first operations. And they were not wrong.

Political concealment of Japanese aggression in the Pacific. Militarist Japan carried out the political concealment of its unleashing of war in the Pacific on as great a scale and with no less persistence than fascist Germany.

The political treachery of the Japanese militarists was known to the entire world long before World War II. In 1904 Japan, making use of the recommendation of the naval theorist Mahan to start a war "with a surprise blow to the enemy at its weakest point, determined ahead of time," made a treacherous attack on tsarist Russia. And it also unexpectedly and treacherously attacked China in 1931 and 1937.

Making the final decision to unleash war in the Pacific, the Japanese cabinet asserted in a session on 1 December 1941 that military operations should begin suddenly, without a declaration of war.[1]

The concentration and deployment of the ground forces, navy, and air force for initial operations in the Pacific were carried out by Japan under the cover of diplomatic talks with the U.S. government. The talks continued for 6 months, until the very eve of the attack on Pearl Harbor. In addition, the Japanese government, after determining in advance the time for going over to the offensive against American possessions in the Pacific, tried in every possible way to convince the U.S. leaders of its profound interest in settling the conflicts between the two countries by diplomatic means. Thus, a telegram to the Japanese ambassador in Washington at the end of November stated, "It is not desirable that you create the impression that the talks are halted. Merely state that you are awaiting instructions. . . ."[2] A telegram to the ambassador on 1 December said ". . .To avoid excessive suspicion from the United States, we have given instructions to announce through the press and other channels that, despite the presence of certain major disagreements between Japan and the United States, the talks are to continue."[3] The last Japanese note, which formally broke off the diplomatic talks, was handed to the U.S. government 30 minutes before the attack on Pearl Harbor.

Militarist Japan used the deployment of its armed forces on foreign territories, in Manchuria, China, and Indochina, to conceal its strategic plans in the Pacific. Thus, the more than 2-fold increase (from 11 to 29 divisions) in the fall of 1941 in the size of the Kwantung Army stationed in Manchuria immediately killed two birds with one stone. On one hand, the Japanese command strengthened its forces designated for use against the Soviet Union, and, on the other, let it be known to the U.S. and England that such an increase in the composition of the Kwantung Army was supposedly not accidental and was related to preparations for an attack on the USSR in the near future. The additional mobilization conducted by Japan after the invasion of Soviet territory by fascist German forces also served to create false notions about the intentions of the Japanese command to attack the USSR in the summer of 1941.

In diplomatic displays and in purely military concealment measures the Japanese political and military leaders, like the fascist German leaders, were counting mainly on the anticommunist and anti-Soviet convictions of the U.S. and English ruling circles. For example, in making a show of reinforcing the Kwantung Army, the Japanese military clique thus seemed to answer the fervent desire of the western powers to direct aggression to the north, against the USSR. The vigilance of the leaders of these powers was thus dulled, and the political and operational-strategic concealment of the aggression being prepared against them achieved its goals.

In both fascist Germany and militarist Japan particular attention was devoted to maintaining secrecy over the details of the plans for the initial campaigns and the place and time for the first attacks.

To prevent leaks of information through diplomatic channels about their aggressive plans, the German and Japanese governments sharply restricted diplomatic correspondence on matters related to preparations for war and provided extremely little information to their allies on their intentions. For example, the Hitlerite government kept its allies in ignorance for a long time on Germany's actual policy toward the USSR. The information given to Germany's allies did not go beyond the limits of the general plan of issuing misleading information. Thus, the Romanian government and military circles were informed that forces were being concentrated in the east to conceal major operations being prepared against England. At the same time, it was stressed that increased vigilance was required from both Romania and Germany. Finland, which the German government trusted more, was fed the notion of supposed preparations by the USSR to attack Germany, a notion that assumed the possibility of preemptive operations by Germany against the USSR. As for Japan, Hitler ordered that no information be supplied to Japan about the Barbarossa plan. Italy was in no better situation. Mussolini did not learn from Hitler of fascist Germany's intention to attack the USSR until 2 June, and did not learn of his decision to start the war until the eve of 22 June from a wordy personal message.[4]

The Japanese government was just as careful in protecting from its allies the secrecy of its plans. The plan of aggression and the date of the attack by militarist Japan on U.S., English, and Dutch possessions remained unknown to the German and Italian governments until the time of the attack by Japanese carrier-based aviation on Pearl Harbor.

2. Operational-Strategic Measures to Ensure Surprise in the First Attacks

In the general system of measures to confuse the enemy about their strategic plans, the military and political leadership of fascist Germany and militarist Japan gave a prominent place to concealment measures of a strictly military character. While the main goal of political actions was to keep secret the very fact of the aggression being prepared and to prevent the country against which the attack was to be made from determining the danger threatening it in time, the concealment of the content of operational-strategic plans was aimed at hiding from the enemy the measures themselves for organizing the aggression– particularly the strategic deployment of the armed forces—the axes of the main attacks, and the time of attack.

In Germany and Japan strict measures were taken to prevent leaks of information on plans and strategies from the superior staffs. In the armed forces of fascist Germany, for example, the number of persons working on planning documents was limited as much as possible. The Japanese military command acted in the same manner. Thus, for a long time Admiral Yamamoto and one or two other officers were the only ones to know of the plan for the attack on

Pearl Harbor.[5] The chief of the naval general staff did not learn of this plan for the first time until October 1941.

However, no matter how stringently measures were carried out to prevent leaks of secret military information, there still were "cracks" through which information slipped.

First, the major operational-strategic directives that outlined the plans for the initial operations and the missions for army groups, armies, aviation, and naval forces were duplicated in a large number of copies. Thus, the Weiss plan was printed in 21 copies, Directive No. 21 (the Barbarossa plan) in 9, and the directive on the strategic concentration and deployment of forces under the Barbarossa plan in 30 copies. Such "generosity" in reproducing important operational documents inevitably created the conditions for divulging military secrets.

Second, the operational-strategic information given in individual directives and orders to various formations and field forces was too detailed and comprehensive. One striking example of such information was Directive No. 5, which was sent on 11 December 1939 from the commander of the German 2nd Air Force, General of Aviation Felmi, to formation commanders and staffs. This directive disclosed the concept of the Gelb plan (first version) and, in particular, indicated that the axis of the fascist German army's main attack against French forces and their allies would cut through Belgium.[6] This directive, along with other important documents, fell into the hands of the Anglo–French command. Having such important documents, the allied general staffs received a full picture of the Gelb plan in its first version.

Both the Hitlerite and the Japanese leadership adhered to the view that in all probability it would be impossible to completely conceal preparations for aggression. For this reason it was essential to mislead the enemy at least about the place, time, and method of operations and to make the enemy hesitate in making or modifying operational-strategic decisions. In organizing deception, quite successful use was made of the enemy's prejudices and mistakes in order to force it to act in ways advantageous for the attacking side. The specific forms and methods of carrying out deception measures depended on the actual military and political situation and on the overall plan of concealment.

The operational-strategic concealment of the invasion being prepared for France quite eloquently demonstrated the character and content of the deception employed by the Hitlerite command.

After the plan for aggression against France through Belgium fell into the hands of the allied command, the German general staff had no doubt that an attempt to carry out this plan would eliminate the effect of surprise. This forced the Hitlerite command to change its plan for the initial operations in the west. Instead of making the main attack on the flanking right wing of the front through

central Belgium, with a subsequent turn to the southwest, toward Paris, a decision was made to make a deep divisive attack from the Ardennes through Luxembourg to Sedan and then to the northwest, with a subsequent turn toward Calais to cut off the northern grouping of allied forces and push them to the sea.

After making such fundamental changes in the Gelb plan, the concealment of the true axis of the main attack assumed for the fascist German command the importance of a key strategic mission, with the success of the entire campaign depending on its successful execution. To keep the new plan secret, the fascist German leadership worked out and put into effect a whole set of concealment measures that were carried out under a unified plan and under unified leadership. The main goal of these measures was to reinforce the Anglo–French command in the conviction that the old operational-strategic plan that it knew about was still in force, that is, to confirm the command's opinion that, as before, the main attack would be made by the flanking right wing through central Belgium.

One of the main concealment measures was the creation in Army Group B, which was to advance through Belgium and Holland, of a powerful troop grouping to be concentrated on the axis of the main attack outlined previously. To conceal the main strategic grouping (Army Group A), which was to advance on the newly chosen axis of the main attack, the concentration areas of many formations of Army Group A were designated outside its sector boundaries, including in the zone of advance for Army Group B. The divisions assigned for the offensive in the first echelon were positioned a great distance from the border (150 to 200 km). The starting areas for the offensive were not taken up until the day before the offensive.

To make the concealment measures seem genuine, the directive for the strategic deployment of the forces was worked out along the same lines as the first version of the Gelb plan. It was issued to the forces at the same time as a prohibition on conducting any measures related to it until a special order came from the high command. But to avoid causing the slightest shadow of a doubt about the validity of the first version of the Gelb plan, the Wehrmacht's generals and officers took part in repeated discussions of the plan, and there was no doubt that the axis of the main attack against France would be through Belgium.

To deceive the allied command, or, more accurately, to reinforce its belief that the attack would come from the north, various means and procedures were used. Thus, among diplomatic personnel in neutral countries and in countries friendly to fascist Germany, the opinion was spread that Schlieffen's ideas (an attack by an enveloping flank) were of permanent importance, were eternal, and so forth. Over telephone lines, which, as was undoubtedly known, were monitored by the enemy, there were "careless" conversations about the concentration of German forces against Holland and Belgium. A number of secret documents, including documents of particular importance, put forward the idea

that the main efforts of the German forces were concentrated on the northern strategic flank. In similar fashion an order was compiled that the fascist German forces would go over to the offensive, and this was announced in all units several hours before the start of the operation. There was also a summary of combat operations published in the press and broadcast by radio toward the end of the first day of the offensive. From these documents only one conclusion could be drawn: the fascist German army was making the main attack in the north. As for operations in the Ardennes sector, they were mentioned briefly in the summary as an event that did not merit particular attention.

The first days of the fascist German offensive on the Western Front showed that the main attack against France and its allies, conducted with large forces from the Ardennes region, was completely unexpected by the French command.

Thus, the concealment measures employed by the Hitlerite military command to cover the invasion of France, including those of a deception character, undoubtedly aided in achieving surprise in making the first attacks.

The methods of operational-strategic concealment and deception employed by the Japanese command differed, essentially in no way from fascist German methods. The imaginary threat of an armed attack by the USSR on Japan was the screen behind which the Japanese military clique hid in preparing operations in the Pacific. This threat purportedly forced the Japanese militarists to prepare for war with their western neighbor.

Under the influence of active political and diplomatic deception and concealment measures of an operational-strategic character, the American, English, and Dutch leaders came to believe that Japan would start a war against the USSR first. Thus, on 16 October 1941, when Japanese Prime Minister Konoye retired and his place was taken by General Tojo, the chief of staff of the U.S. navy, Admiral Stark, assured the commanders of the Asian and Pacific fleets that there was serious danger of war between Japan and the Soviet Union.[7] On 1 October the English commander in chief in the Far East and the commander of the naval base in China reported to London that "Japan at present is concentrating its forces against Russia and cannot suddenly change this orientation, having directed its main forces to the south. . . . We emphasize that at present Japan would least of all like a military campaign in the south. . . ."[8] Such information coincided completely with the English government's desires and assessment of the situation, and at this time the English did not undertake extensive defensive measures against Japan. Its position did not change in November 1941, when data appeared on the transfer of Japanese forces from north Indochina and Canton to the south, and from Shanghai to south Indochina. The supposition that Japan would not begin military operations in the south, particularly against England and the U.S. at the same time, underlay all British policy in the Far East. A consequence of this opinion was the equanimity and complacency of England's political and military leadership in providing for the defense of its Far Eastern possessions.

The American military command was also caught up in the net of extensive Japanese deception measures. This is confirmed because the final maneuver of the Japanese fleet heading for the Hawaiian Islands and the South Seas remained unnoticed by American intelligence. In truth, due must be rendered to the Japanese command, because this maneuver was performed with great skill.

Like the invasion by fascist German forces into France through the Ardennes, the first attacks by the Japanese armed forces against Pearl Harbor, the Philippines, and Malaya were unexpected by the western powers.

3. Effectiveness of Measures to Ensure Surprise in the Attack

That fascist Germany and militarist Japan were able to achieve a surprise attack against their enemies in no way meant that the opposing side knew nothing of the political goals and strategic plans of the aggressor nations and, consequently, could not in some manner eliminate the surprise of aggression. This did not mean that the surprise of the first attacks was a consequence of just the concealment measures. The paradox was that often the leaders of the nations subjected to aggression knew even on the eve of war about the enemy's strategy and plans, possessing more or less reliable information, for example, on the composition and grouping of the aggressor's forces, on the axis of its main attack, and even on the time of attack. Consequently, these leaders had the opportunity to take specific countermeasures to nullify the efforts of the aggressive powers in achieving a surprise attack. However, such opportunities were not used.

This paradox can be explained because in the complex military and political situation on the eve of World War II, the political leaders of the allied powers were guided more in their actions by preconceived views and spuriously constituted schemes and hypotheses than by a sober assessment of the situation and the conclusions following naturally from it. In the specific activities of the western leaders, on whom at this time the fate of war and peace largely depended, one could distinctly note the prejudice of permanently fixed ideas. This prejudice had a clearly expressed class character and was rooted in the notorious Munich policy. This led to a situation where valuable intelligence data on the strategic plans of fascist Germany and imperialist Japan were distorted and misinterpreted. The conclusions from these data were often in flagrant contradiction to the situation that actually existed. As a result, the governments of the allied powers had to pay for this prejudice with a crushing defeat of their armed forces in the initial period of the war, with difficult-to-recover losses in personnel and military equipment, and with the loss of enormous territory.

Due must be rendered to French intelligence. On 20 September 1939, during the military operations in Poland, it had established the start of major movements of fascist German forces from the east to the western regions of Germany. From

this, French intelligence concluded that Hitler and his staff did not intend to continue military operations in Eastern Europe at this time, and that the danger of aggression was shifting to the west. The chief of French intelligence, General Gauchet, also informed the French high command quite accurately about certain features of the aggression unleashed against Poland. He stated that the Germans were employing combat methods such as preliminary massed air attacks against fortified regions, lines of communications, and other vulnerable areas of enemy defenses; neutralization of enemy ground forces during the first moments of the attack; and an offensive with large tank divisions given the mission of penetrating deep into enemy positions without taking up intermediate positions, thus not giving split and encircled units the chance to go over to the defensive.

Proceeding from this, Gauchet proposed that a memorandum be drawn up for French army officers that would generalize the experience of the war in Poland. To this proposal, the commander in chief of the French forces, General Gamelin, replied that France was not Poland and that Germany would not employ against France the methods that it used in Poland. Gamelin thought that dissemination of the memorandum would only cause anxiety in the people. The general made a serious error. On the fields of France, Belgium, Holland, and Luxembourg, the fascist German forces employed the same combat methods used in Poland.

French intelligence, with a good network of agents on German territory, had fairly completely discovered the grouping of fascist German forces by the start of the offensive (see table 10).

Table 10. Composition of German Groupings by the Start of the Invasion of France (Actual and According to French Intelligence Data).*

Name of army groups	Actual composition of groups (in divisions)	Composition of army groups according to French intelligence data	Error in determining number of divisions
Army Group B	29	27	-2
Army Group A	45	45	--
Army Group C	19	20	+1
High Command Reserve	42	45	+3
Total	135*	137	+2

*In addition, there were three separate regiments.

French intelligence went even further in assessing the enemy, having drawn the correct conclusion about the axis of its main attack. The French felt that the attack would come to the north of the Moselle River in approximately the area between Limburg and Luxembourg. This conclusion was reinforced by the detection of the main forces of the fascist German tank and motorized divisions to the east of these cities. However, the French ruling circles and the French

supreme high command ignored the data coming from their intelligence and did not consider its conclusions. With great stubbornness they held to their conviction that the fascist German forces would make the main attack through Belgium. No facts or arguments could shake this conviction. When the commander of German Army Group B, Colonel General Bock (who at one time had had great doubts about the advisability of shifting the main attack through the Ardennes), learned on the first day of the offensive about the start of the Anglo-French forces' advance toward the Dyle River, he noted in his diary "So then, the madmen are really coming!"[10]

Nor was the fascist German command able to conceal the time of the start of the invasion from allied intelligence. The approximate date of the start of the attack was known to the allies as early as March 1940, and somewhat later, the final date of 10 May was known. Nevertheless, the higher military and political leadership in none of the countries of the Anglo-French bloc was able to make use of this information. Evidently, here, in addition to the political prejudice of the allied leaders, a certain role had been played by the lowering of vigilance under the effect of the fascist German command's concealment measures calculated especially to conceal the actual time of the attack. The Hitlerite command changed the time for the start of the invasion of France 29 times. In one way or another these repeated shifts became known to the general staffs and the governments of the western powers, who gradually grew accustomed to them, and the vigilance of the military and political leadership in these nations was lulled. When, on the eve of the Hitlerite attack, the agents of the Anglo-French bloc transmitted numerous reports on the fascist German forces moving up to the French border, this was seen as another attempt to unleash a "war of nerves." These reports were disregarded.

It is difficult to deny the purely psychological effect of such concealment measures, but at the base of the biased views and convictions of the ruling circles in the western powers there were, all the same, political motives. This can be seen again by the response of these circles to the Hitlerite leadership's next attempt at deception, which was made literally on the eve of the act of aggression.

On 8 May, 2 days before the fascist German forces went over to the offensive, German and Italian radio broadcast an announcement that a British conspiracy aimed at an invasion of Holland had been discovered. At the same time, reports on the movement of two German armies toward the Dutch borders were harshly denied as "ridiculous rumors," supposedly spread by "English instigators of war" to distract attention from the invasion in preparation for this country. In response to this, the French ruling circles, still clinging to a policy of "appeasement," took emergency measures to prevent undesirable incidents on the border, while the Belgian government, to prove that it did not believe the "ridiculous rumors," restored a 5-day army leave. Thus, no matter how strange it might seem, the leaders of the nations in the Anglo-French bloc, in stubbornly refusing to recognize the facts, greatly aided fascist Germany in achieving a surprise attack against its enemies.

Of approximately the same character was the conduct of high American officials on the eve of the surprise attack by the Japanese fleet and aviation on Pearl Harbor.

At least as of 27 November 1941, when the talks with Japan had reached a deadlock and it had become clear that war could not be avoided, the American military command, it seemed, should have sharply increased preparations to repel aggression to prevent, at the very least, a surprise attack on U.S. Pacific possessions. This was particularly so since the military command had intelligence data on the real possibility of such an attack. For example, in January 1941 the American ambassador in Japan, Grew, informed the State Department that in Japan plans were under way for "a surprise massed attack on Pearl Harbor in the event of 'difficulties' with the U.S."[11] In September 1941 American intelligence noted a great increase in diplomatic correspondence between Tokyo and the Japanese ambassador in the U.S. and between Tokyo and the Japanese consulate in Hawaii. This correspondence was decoded and provided direct evidence of Japan's aggressive intentions in the Pacific and, in particular, of its intended aggression against Pearl Harbor. However, this intelligence information was viewed as not of particular importance because it provided, as it seemed to the American military command, ordinary espionage information. This was affirmed later by Army Chief of Staff General Marshall.[12]

After 27 November 1941 the U.S. army and navy commands restricted themselves to merely warning the forces of a possible Japanese attack on the Philippines, Thailand, and Borneo and gave instructions to take measures against enemy sabotage at military installations. The U.S. armed forces were not even brought to a state of increased combat readiness, while the army and navy commands did not even suspect an attack by the Japanese fleet and aviation on Pearl Harbor.

As is well known, this attack, a surprise, took place and caused enormous losses to the U.S. navy.

* * *

World War II showed that the nations of the fascist bloc, in preparing to unleash aggression, attached paramount importance to concealing a surprise attack against their enemies. The methods of concealment were subordinate to strategic plans.

Measures to conceal aggression were no longer in the scope of military control organs alone. Government agencies took over the lion's share, making extensive use of reconnaissance and counterintelligence, diplomacy, and all of the mass media for this purpose.

The main attention was concentrated on ensuring surprise in making the first attacks, which meant keeping secret the strategic deployment of the armed forces,

the plan for the initial operations, the axis of the main attack, and the time of attack.

The diversity and complexity of conducting concealment measures required coordination, precise planning, and centralized leadership by government and military organs.

The headquarters for operational direction of the war under Supreme Commander of the Armed Forces Hitler served as this organ in fascist Germany. Hitler was both the head of state and the leader of the Nazi party. In Japan these functions were performed jointly by the high command of the army and navy and by the ministry of foreign affairs under the general supervision of Prime Minister Tojo.

In concealing their strategic plans, fascist Germany and militarist Japan assigned the main role to political and diplomatic maneuvers. These maneuvers were designed to lower the vigilance of the governments and people of the nations against which aggression was planned, thus ensuring the surprise of the first attack. Additionally, the leaders of the aggressor nations and their governments had no qualms about the political and diplomatic means used to influence their enemies. This arsenal included anticommunism and anti-Sovietism, political treachery, blackmail, flattery, manipulation of conflicts between nations and of the people's desire for peace, exploitation of the political prejudice of leaders of the western nations, and so on.

In the system of measures to ensure surprise in the first attacks, there was a considerable enlargement of the role played by deception of the enemy. This role assumed unprecedented scope.

World War II showed that political and operational-strategic measures to conceal aggression had a great influence on achieving surprise in the first attacks and contributed to the success of the aggressive nations in achieving the goals of the initial operations.

At the same time, despite the use of refined methods of concealment, concealment was not able to keep totally hidden either the strategic plans of fascist Germany and militarist Japan or the process of their entry into war. As a rule, the intelligence agencies of the powers against which aggression was being prepared managed to find out about the aggressor's plans and to determine the character and extent of most of the enemy's strategic deployment activities.

Finally, fascist Germany and militarist Japan were assisted in achieving surprise in the first attacks against their enemies because of the western powers' policy of tolerating aggression and directing it against the USSR. This policy was stubbornly pursued by the western powers and was a result of their leaders' biased approach to appraising the enemy's strategic plans.

Notes

1. See *Major Decisions*, p. 119.
2. *Chto proizoshlo v Pirl-Kharbore. Dokumenty o napadenii Yaponii na Pirl-Kharbor 7 dekabrya 1941 goda. Perevod s angliyskogo.* [What Happened at Pearl Harbor: Documents on the Japanese Attack on Pearl Harbor 7 December 1941], translated from the English, (Moscow: Voyeniz-dat, 1961), p. 68. [Hereafter cited as *What Happened at Pearl Harbor*—U.S. Ed.]
3. Ibid.
4. See *Top Secret!*, pp. 186–190.
5. See *What Happened at Pearl Harbor*, p. 286.
6. See V. Dashichev, "Meshelenskiy intsident i nemetskiy plan razgroma Frantsii" ["The Mechelen Incident and the German Plan for the Defeat of France"], *Journal of Military History*, 1959, No. 3, p. 50.
7. See *Major Decisions*, pp. 113–114.
8. Butler and Gwyer, p. 219.
9. See V. Dashichev, "Iz istorii bor'by imperialisticheskikh razvedok" ["From the History of the Struggle of Imperialist Intelligence Agencies"], *Journal of Military History*, 1964, No. 1, p. 107.
10. Proektor, p. 266.
11. Sherman, p. 14.
12. See *What Happened at Pearl Harbor*, p. 212.

Chapter 7. Fascist Germany's Plans in the War Against the USSR. Strategic Deployment of the Armed Forces

Fascist politicians and strategists regarded the war against the Soviet Union as the decisive step in their struggle to gain world supremacy. The Hitlerite leadership set a goal not simply of defeating the Soviet Armed Forces and seizing our country's territory, but also of eliminating the Soviet social and state structure and destroying the world's first socialist nation. Preparing for the war against the USSR, the leaders of fascist Germany compiled the so-called Ost plan, which stated that "it is not just a matter of defeating the state with Moscow as its center. The achievement of this historical goal would never mean total solution of the problem. It is more a manner of destroying the Russians as a people, of disuniting them."[1]

The war between fascist Germany and the Soviet Union thus became an uncompromising armed confrontation between nations representing opposite socioeconomic systems. In other words, it became an openly class war. It raised to full view the question of whether or not there was to be a nation of workers and peasants, a Soviet socialist society.

To achieve their political goals and strategic plans in the war against the socialist nation, the Hitlerite leaders mobilized the entire economy of fascist Germany and of almost all the conquered European nations, called on tremendous human resources, and employed a multimillion-man army trained in military campaigns and armed to the teeth with modern combat equipment.

1. Strengthening Fascist Germany Before the Start of War With the USSR

The successful military campaigns against Poland, France, and a number of other nations greatly strengthened fascist Germany economically and militarily. Almost every country that was annexed, occupied, or fell into the sphere of German influence had various minerals necessary to wage war. Thus, Austria had iron ore, Czechoslovakia had manganese, iron pyrite, and wood, Poland had coal, lead, and copper, Romania had oil, Hungary had bauxite, lead, and zinc, France had coal, iron ore, and bauxite, and so forth.

Germany's position was greatly strengthened also because it annexed vast territories on which millions of people lived (see table 11).

Table 11.[2]

Date	Germany		Areas annexed by Germany		Total	
	a	b	a	b	a	b
1 Sept 1939	582,279	76,426	48,901	7,485	631,180	83,911
1 June 1941	680,871	89,940	217,835	27,428	898,707	117,368

Key: a—area, sq km.
b—population, 1,000 persons.

As follows from the table, in 1 year and 9 months, merely because of the annexed regions, Germany's territory was enlarged by more than 217,000 sq km. Its population increased by more than 27 million.

Of great importance for the military and economic strengthening of fascist Germany was its seizure in the occupied countries of enormous reserves of stockpiled strategic raw materials and the use of the industrial capacity in these countries for war needs. In the first 7 months of World War II, Norway, Holland, Belgium, and France had stockpiled in their port hundreds of thousands of tons of metal, fuel, rubber, raw materials for the textile industry, and so forth, and all this was now in the hands of the fascist German army.

Industry in these countries was well supplied with raw materials even before the war and could meet large German orders for an extended time. Germany's production base for iron and steel was greatly expanded because the coal mines, ore mines, and steel mills in Holland, Belgium, France, and Poland were delivered up to fascist Germany virtually intact. Germany thus obtained an exceptional opportunity to develop its economy at the expense of major enterprises in the occupied countries. This did not take long to show up in the indicators for German economic development (see table 12).

Table 12.[1]

Commodity	1939	1941
Coal, million tons*	332.8	404.3
Iron " "	17.5	24.3
Steel " "	22.5	31.8
Oil " "	3.0**	4.8

*Data for coal for 1938-39 and 1940-41.
**Data for 1938.

The military and economic potential of fascist Germany was supplemented by enormous amounts of captured weapons, combat equipment, and transport. The fascist Germans obtained the military equipment of 6 Norwegian, 18 Dutch, 22 Belgian, 12 English, and 92 French divisions. Some 92 fascist German divisions were supplied with captured motor transport.[4]

Germany was thus quite successful in following the rapacious principle of "war feeds on war."

The combat might of the fascist German army was virtually unaffected by the loss of personnel and combat equipment incurred from 1 September 1939 until the start of the Great Patriotic War, so insignificant w this loss. During this time the losses of the German armed forces were 97,136 men killed and missing in action—3 percent of the army's personnel.[5] These losses were less than one-third of the losses suffered by the fascist German forces during the Red Army counteroffensive at Stalingrad. Losses of combat equipment were equally small, while the expenditure of ammunition was quite insignificant (see table 13).

Table 13.*

	Available ammunition on 1 April 1940, 1,000 units	Expended ammunition from 10 May thru 20 June 1940	
		1,000 units	%
For mortars (81 mm)	4,377	459	10
For light infantry weapons (75 mm)	6,237	381	6
For heavy infantry weapons (150 mm)	708	82	11
For light field howitzers (105 mm)	18,970	1,463	7
For heavy field howitzers (150 mm)	3,813	640	17

From the table it can be seen that the expenditure of large caliber artillery ammunition ranged from 6 to 11 percent of the available supplies.

Preparing for war against the Soviet Union, fascist Germany continuously increased allocations for war needs. While in 1939 its military expenditures amounted to 37 billion marks, in 1940 the figure was 49 billion marks, and, in 1941, 71 billion marks. This was 58 percent of the national income.[7] The size of the fascist German armed forces grew and they received more equipment. The leadership devoted particular attention to the development of the ground forces and aviation, the branches of the armed forces that were to accomplish the main missions in the war (see table 14).

Table 14.[a]

Name	1 September 1939	1 May 1940	1 June 1941
Total divisions	103	156	214
Including:			
Tank	5	10	21
Motorized	4	6	14
Tanks	3,200	3,387	5,640
Aircraft	4,405	5,900	10,000

At the same time, the combat equipment of the fascist German army underwent substantial qualitative changes and aircraft and tanks were rapidly replaced. In the wars against Poland and in Western Europe light tanks (T-1 and T-2) made up 70 to 85 percent of the fascist German tank force. Before the start of war with the Soviet Union the number of light tanks in the fascist German army declined to 35 percent of the total.

By the start of the attack on the USSR, fascist Germany had been able to secure for itself a very advantageous strategic position. The defeat of France, Belgium, and Holland, and the drastic weakening of the military might of Great Britain after the defeats it suffered, meant that Germany did not have to show particular concern for its rear area in the west. Moreover, the U.S. was still not in the war and so did not represent a real obstacle to carrying out German imperialism's aggressive plans. By occupying Norway and by turning Finland into an ally, the Hitlerites firmly secured their northern flank; by seizing Yugoslavia and Greece, and by turning Bulgaria, Romania, and Hungary inton their vassals, they strengthened their southern flank.

The military might of fascist Germany was undoubtedly strengthened by the combat experience acquired during the engagements in Europe. This might was also strengthened by a well-known psychological factor: the aura of invincibility that surrounded the fascist Wehrmacht after the easy victories in Western Europe. At the same time, not only the leaders of fascist Germany, but also many politicians in the western powers, assumed that there were no forces in the world that could stop the invincible advance of the fascist military machine. The fascist politicians and strategists were confident that this machine, tested out on the battlefields of Europe, would crush the Soviet Union.

2. The Plans for the Initial Operations Under the Barbarossa Plan

Fascist Germany prepared for war against the Soviet Union more carefully and purposefully than it had for war against any other nation. In essence, the campaigns against Poland, France, and other powers were merely stages on the path to a decisive clash with the USSR. "We can move against Russia,"

said Hitler at a meeting with the leaders of the armed forces on 23 November 1939, "only after we have freed ourselves in the west."[9]

Hitler and his stooges had long been hatching the idea of attacking the USSR and putting an end to its existence. The final decision was made to go to war against our country in July 1940, soon after the surrender of France. It was then that the Hitlerite generals began working out their war plan.

Planning the attack on the Soviet Union, the fascist German command intended to achieve victory in the same manner as over Poland and France, in a single rapid campaign. The confidence of Hitler and his allies in the possibility of a blitzkrieg defeat of the USSR was based on a number of false assumptions about the international and internal situation of the Soviet nation.

The fascist German government felt that in a war with Germany, the Soviet Union, because of the anti-Soviet policy of the western powers, would be politically isolated and unable to obtain either external political support or economic and military aid. This alone, in the assumption of the fascist leaders, was supposed to put the Soviet Union in an extremely difficult situation and provide Germany with enormous military advantages.

The fascist rulers of Germany put even greater hopes on the instability of the social system of the Soviet nation. They felt that with the first failures on the front, the hidden contradictions that allegedly existed between the workers, the peasants, and the intelligensia, and between the different peoples living in the Soviet Union, would inevitably lead to open internecine struggle, to the disorganization of the government, and to the collapse of the nation. In planning the war against the USSR, a decisive role was given to this factor.

The entire course of subsequent events showed the baselessness of the Hitlerite leadership's plans. The fascist ringleaders, under the sway of traditional notions about the backwardness of tsarist Russia, did not understand the fundamental sociopolitical, economic, and cultural changes that had taken place in our country after the Great October Socialist Revolution. The moral and political unity of the Soviet nation and its solidarity around the Communist Party, the solid ties of friendship between the Soviet peoples, and Soviet patriotism seemed merely propaganda slogans devoid of any real content The Germans were extremely skeptical of the ability of the Communist Party and the Soviet government to raise up and inspire tens of millions of workers and peasants of different nationalities to fight.

To a great degree the plan for a brief campaign against the USSR derived from the Hitlerite leadership's underestimation of the combat capability of the Soviet Armed Forces. The German general staff knew that the Red Army and Navy were undergoing major reorganization and rearmament. For this reason Hitler was convinced that for a certain period the combat capability of the Soviet

Armed Forces would be at a low level and that in a clash with the German armed forces the Soviet Armed Forces would not withstand the powerful initial attack and would be quickly defeated. At the same time, the leaders of fascist Germany felt that the reorganization and rearmament of the Red Army could, over a certain period, greatly increase its combat capabilities. Hitler hurried the general staff in preparing the eastern campaign. As early as July 1940, he declared, "The sooner we defeat Russia the better."[10]

This idea underlay the plan for war against the USSR (the Barbarossa plan), as set forth in Hitler's Directive No. 21 on 18 December 1940. It began with the words, "The German armed forces must be ready to defeat Soviet Russia during a brief campaign even before the war against England is ended."[11]

Speaking at a meeting on 9 January 1941, Hitler again stated that "although the Russian armed forces are a clay giant without a head, it is nevertheless impossible to precisely foresee their further development."[12] In any event, he continued, Russia must be defeated now, "when the Russian army is devoid of leaders and poorly prepared, and when the Russians must overcome great difficulties in their military industry."[13] Additionally, he advanced the opinion that "even now we must not underestimate the Russians."[14] From this he concluded that for a war in the east it would be essential to allocate a maximum of forces, which only Germany was capable of mobilizing, and to throw all of them simultaneously into battle to defeat the Red Army in a minimum of time. "The operation will only make sense," asserted Hitler, "if we defeat the nation with a single blow."[15]

Though quite blinded by the successes of the German armed forces in Europe and by a clear underestimation of the defense capability of the Soviet Union, the Hitlerite military leadership could not avoid taking into consideration the enormous extent of the Soviet-German Front and the vastness of the USSR's territory. It also considered the real possibility of active resistance by the Soviet Armed Forces. For this reason, preparing for war against our country, the fascist German command planned to achieve the campaign's ultimate goals not in one strategic effort (one strategic operation), as had been done in Poland, and not as a result of two strategic operations conducted sequentially, as in France, **but in three stages of development of military operations, each of which represented a set of strategic operations carried out simultaneously by groups of armies**

In the first, decisive stage of war the main forces of the Red Army were to be defeated in the border zone and Soviet forces were not to be allowed to retreat beyond the Western Dvina and Dnepr rivers. In this stage the Baltic republics and Leningrad were to be captured. In the second stage a rapid pursuit of the remains of the defeated forces was to be undertaken, and, as the Hitlerite strategists assumed, the scattered resistance of the limited reserves being moved up from the nation's interior would be smashed. By the end of the second stage

Moscow and the Donets Basin were to be taken. In the third, final stage the fascist German army was to reach the line of Arkhangelsk, the Volga, and Astrakhan, with the occupation of vast Soviet territory.

According to the final version of the Barbarossa plan, the concept for the initial operations was based on the idea of the surprise use of large numbers of aircraft and tanks to make a series of deep, powerful attacks on a number of axes along the Soviet-German Front, thus cutting the front into parts, isolating from one another the strategic groupings of Soviet forces deployed in the Baltic republics, Belorussia, and the Ukraine, and destroying these forces before reserves of the Soviet High Command could arrive from the country's interior. In Directive No. 21 (the Barbarossa plan) the overall concept for achieving Germany's military and political goal was expressed as follows:

"The main forces of the Russian ground troops, which are in western Russia, must be destroyed in bold operations with deep, rapid advances by tank spearheads. The retreat of combat-capable forces into the vast expanses of the Russian territory must be prevented.

"By rapid pursuit a line must be reached from which the Russian air force will be unable to attack the imperial territory of Germany. . . .

"During these operations the Russian Baltic Fleet will quickly lose its bases and so will be unable to continue the struggle.

"Effective operations by the Russian air force must be prevented by our powerful attacks at the start of the operation."[16]

Taking consideration of the enormous extent of the Soviet-German Front, the fascist German command made a decision in the first stage of the campaign to carry out, simultaneously, three major strategic operations, each of which was to develop on a separate strategic axis: the Leningrad, Smolensk, and Kiev. These operations were to begin by making three deep, divisive attacks with the following maneuver: in the center of the front, a maneuver on converging axes to encircle the forces on the Western Front in Belorussia and to simultaneously split them into parts; on the flanks, a maneuver on diverging axes to cut off and drive the forces on the Northwestern Front toward the Baltic coast while encircling the forces on the Southwestern Front in the Lvov salient.

Consequently, in contrast to the campaigns in Poland and France, in the initial operations on the Soviet-German Front the Hitlerite leadership intended to use a complex combination of three simultaneous strategic operations and an entire array of strategic maneuvers, which consisted of a series of simultaneous, deep frontal attacks developing into a maneuver to envelop large groupings from two sides, cut them off from one another, and, at the same time, split each of them into parts.

Planning the initial operations, the Hitlerite strategists felt that it was essential, no matter what the cost, **to defeat the main Soviet forces at a point west of the Western Dvina and Dnepr rivers**. The chief of the army general staff, General Halder, pointed out in a report to Hitler that "... German planning should use tank spearheads to help to prevent the Russians from creating a solid defensive front to the west of these two rivers."[17]

Under the Barbarossa plan, the fascist German forces were to deploy on a front of almost 2,000 km, from Memel to Izmail, and were to be brought together in three army groups: North, Center, and South. The strongest was Army Group Center (the 4th and 9th field armies, the 2nd and 3rd tank groups), assigned for the offensive on the Smolensk axis. Here, in the Hitlerite command's opinion, the Red Army had to concentrate its main forces both at the start of the war and in its subsequent stages, when the threat to Moscow would arise.

Army Group Center, after concentrating its main efforts on the flanks, had the mission of encircling and destroying the grouping of Soviet forces in Belorussia. The tank groups operating on the flanks, in developing the offensive along convergent axes, were to link up near Minsk, and then continue the offensive to the Dnepr, cross it from a march formation, and reach Smolensk.

Army Group South (the 11th, 17th, and 6th field armies, the 1st Tank Group) was to advance to the south of the Pripet River in the general direction of Kiev. Its mission was to destroy the Soviet forces in Galicia and the western Ukraine to the west of the Dnepr River. During the offensive, crossings had to be seized quickly on the Dnepr near Kiev and to the south of the city, thus creating the conditions to continue operations to the east of the Dnepr. The tank group was to cut rapidly into the region around Kiev, and then, by advancing along the Dnepr, was to prevent the retreat of Soviet forces to the left bank of the river.

Army Group North (the 16th and 18th field armies and the 4th Tank Group) received the mission to advance from East Prussia in the general direction of Dvinsk (Daugavpils), Pskov, and Leningrad, destroying Soviet forces in the Baltic republics and seizing ports on the Baltic Sea. In addition, the German forces, to obtain favorable conditions for a successful advance on Leningrad, were to prevent combat-capable Soviet forces from retreating east from the Baltic republics.

In planning the first operations, the fascist German command attached primary importance to the tank groups. The 2nd and 3rd tank groups from Army Group Center were to play the decisive role in encircling Soviet forces in Belorussia, while the 1st and 4th tank groups, which were part of Army Groups North and South, were to carry out the role of tank spearheads during the maneuver to cut off the forces on the Northwestern Front in the Baltic republics and those on the Southwestern Front in the Ukraine.

The armed forces of Germany's allies Finland and Romania were to take part in operations on the strategic flanks of the Soviet-German Front. In the first strategic operations they were to carry out individual missions by going on the offensive on separate operational axes and tying down the Soviet forces in the area of their operations.

The first strategic operations would be to a depth of 500 to 600 km, and on certain axes to an even greater depth. Each army group conducted offensive operations on a separate strategic axis. The cooperation between army groups was of an operational-strategic character.

The ground force offensive was to be carried out in close cooperation with the air force. Army Group North was supported by the 1st Air Force, Army Group Center by the 2nd Air Force, and Army Group South by the 4th Air Force. The main aviation efforts were concentrated on fighting enemy aviation and providing direct support for advancing ground forces.

Planning the war against the Soviet Union, the Hitlerite leadership also foresaw operations by the fascist German navy. The navy's main mission remained the struggle against England on the sea lines of communications. The navy was to take a direct part in the war against the USSR by supporting German lines of communications on the Baltic and Barents seas and by blockading the Gulf of Finland—thus carrying out comparatively unimportant missions. In the struggle against our navy, the fascist German army and air force were assigned the chief role, since they were to capture ports and naval bases from the land.

The strategic plans developed by the Hitlerite leadership for the first strategic operations against the USSR, in proceeding from a flagrantly erroneous assessment of the international and internal situation of the Soviet nation, were thus constructed with the use of temporary, extraneous factors in the war. However, in the planning to unleash aggression against the Soviet Union, and in the direct preparation of this aggression, it is impossible not to see a number of impressive features, in particular, the carefully conceived system of measures to ensure a surprise attack and the careful elaboration of operational plans.

3. The Strategic Concentration and Deployment of the Fascist German Forces

In planning and carrying out the strategic concentration and deployment of its forces for aggression against the USSR, the Hitlerite commmand relied on the same military theory provisions and consequent strategic principles that it had put into effect in the wars against Poland and France and France's allies. However, in planning and carrying out troop concentration and deployment against the USSR, there were unusual and very important features. Not before any other campaign in World War II had the Hitlerite command found it

necessary to regroup so many troops and so much equipment as before the invasion of the USSR. More than 140 German divisions and over 30 Romanian, Finnish, and Hungarian divisions had to be shifted to our borders, and the aviation of 3 air forces had to be rebased from the west to the east. And this did not count the equipment, weapons, ammunition, and units of the high command reserve.

A characteristic feature in the concentration and deployment of the fascist German army along our borders was that this had to be carried out, and was carried out, when there was a nonaggression pact in effect between the USSR and Germany. On the other hand, the regrouping of forces to the Western Front (against France) took place under the conditions of a war already declared. The Hitlerite leadership resorted to outright political treachery, having stressed the nonaggression pact with the USSR, and in its complex preparations for war against our country placed a great emphasis on the political and operational-strategic concealment of aggression. This assumed unprecedented scope.

Finally, concentration and deployment of troop formations against the Soviet Union were undertaken with benefit of the already sufficiently rich experience in large troop regroupings acquired by the fascist German command during the perpetration of acts of aggression in Europe, starting in 1935. This made it possible for the various military control organs directly responsible for redeploying the forces to carry out the redeployment so secretly, which could be done only in the specific military and political situation of the prewar period.

In time and content, the process of concentrating and deploying the fascist German army against the Soviet Union can be roughly divided into two main stages.

The first stage encompassed the period from July 1940 through January 1941. The main feature of this stage was the advance of a sort of covering echelon and its deployment on the territory of East Prussia, Poland, northern Norway, and Romania.

During the first stage, the staff of Army Group B, 3 field army staffs (the 4th, 12th, and 18th), a tank group staff, 12 corps staffs (including 6 tank), and the so-called military mission in Romania—44 divisions in all, including 8 tank—were concentrated in the east.

The second stage, which lasted from February 1941 until the start of the war, consisted of the concentration and deployment of the main forces along Soviet borders.

During these 4 months the fascist German command transferred 113 divisions. This transfer was divided into five so-called deployment echelons (see table 15).

Table 15.[18]

Name of echelon	Number of divisions in echelon	Time of movement by rail	Duration of movement of echelons, days	Average rate of transport
First echelon	8/1	4 Feb—12 Mar	36	1 division in 4.5 days
Second echelon	18	16 Mar—8 Apr	24	1 division in 1.5 days
Third echelon	16	10 Apr—10 May	30	1 division in 2 days
Fourth echelon	47/28	25 May—22 Jun	28	1.5—2 divisions per day
Fifth echelon (strategic reserves)	24/3	after 22 Jun	--	--
Total	113/31			

Note. The numerator represents total divisions; the denominator, tank and motorized.

The transfer to the east of the enormous mass of personnel, combat equipment, weapons, and ammunition was carried out under a carefully elaborated plan. From 1 February through 25 May the railroads operated on a peacetime schedule, but from 25 May a wartime schedule went into effect. In other words, the troop transfers accelerated approximately a month before the war. The following were accepted as transportation standards: 70 trains for 1 infantry division and 100 trains for 1 tank division. Because of the insufficient capacity of the railroads, many mobile formations moved to the concentration areas under their own power, but the tracked equipment of these formations was still transported by rail to save engine life. The traffic schedule was so rigid that loaded trains, by decision of the railroad administration, could be sent back if they were not unloaded on time.

Provision was made that all military cargo would be placed in the starting areas for the offensive as close as possible to the border, while the troops were unloaded and concentrated at a relatively great distance from the border. In addition, the closer the time of the attack approached, the closer the unloading stations were set up to the border. While the first deployment echelon was unloaded at stations along a line through Danzig and Katowice, 150 to 180 km from the border, the second echelon was unloaded at stations along a line through Konigsberg, Warsaw, and Tarnow, 80 to 100 km from the border, and the third, at stations along a line through Allenstein and Radom, 60 to 80 km from the border. The fourth deployment echelon was unloaded at approximately this last position.

The infantry divisions, which were 7 to 30 km from the border, and the tank and motorized divisions, which were 20 to 30 km away, were moved up to the starting areas secretly during nighttime movements in the first half of June.

The advance of the fourth echelon to the designated areas, in completing the concentration of the main forces for making the first attack, was the most crucial stage of strategic deployment. The so-called maximum movement schedule went into effect. This in fact signaled the open concentration of the main forces along the Soviet border. This could still be explained by resorting to all sorts of lies, but it could no longer be concealed.

The transfer of forces in the fourth echelon of the deployment was carried out in two groups. The forces in Group A, which moved up from 12 May through 9 June, included a number of infantry and motorized formations, all the ground and air force units, the logistics units for the ground forces, and units of the supreme high command reserve. The advance of the forces in Group B, which lasted from 2 June until the start of the war, coincided with the concealed combat deployment of the formations moved up earlier. At approximately the same time, the tank and still undeployed motorized formations took up the designated areas.

The concealed advance of the assault groupings into the starting areas for the offensive ended the strategic deployment. Only the last several days before the invasion were allotted to this, and the advance was planned so that these groupings would approach the border the night before the offensive and remain there for just several hours. The fascist German assault groupings for the drive against France had deployed in approximately the same manner.[19]

The departure of the infantry formations to the starting areas of the offensive was undertaken 12 days before the start of the war; the tank and motorized formations began to move out 8 days later. The infantry divisions moved to the border at night under cover of the fortified battalions previously positioned there.

Fascist German aviation also moved closer to the border. As early as the spring of 1941, fighter and organic aviation occupied airfields 40 km from the border, while bomber aviation was not further away than 180 km. The concentration of most of the flying units on the airfields ended by 18 June. Some air units arrived on the eve of the day of the offensive.

The advance and deployment of the staffs were carried out last, as had been the practice in the fascist German army on the eve of the invasion of Poland and France. Before the attack on the USSR, the staffs of units at the operational level that had taken up their assigned positions were concealed as branches of troop control organs that had been in place for a long time and whose location was no secret to Soviet intelligence. The shift of these staffs to the deployment

areas of the subordinate formations was carried out on the eve of the invasion, starting at the moment the tank forces arrived at their positions.

The Hitlerite command thus attached extremely great importance to the final stages of strategic concentration and, particularly, deployment of the troops. The fascist German army's initial assault groupings were formed in these stages, and the forces were brought to full combat readiness.

The fifth, and last, deployment echelon, which was made up of the strategic reserves (24 divisions), moved forward and was committed to battle once war had already begun.

Including these strategic reserves, from the start of February until 4 July 1941, 61 infantry and 29 tank and motorized divisions, a large number of supreme high command reserve units, ground and air force units, logistics units and installations, and other special units were shifted to the borders of the Soviet Union between the Baltic and the Carpathians. It took 11,784 trains (200,000 cars) to move these forces.

In all for the attack on the Soviet Union, fascist Germany fielded from the ground forces 152 divisions (including 19 tank and 14 motorized) and 2 independent brigades. These formations numbered 3.3 million men. If air force (1.2 million men) and navy personnel (100,000 men) are counted, then the fascist German armed forces thrown against the USSR numbered 4.6 million men. This was equal to 77 percent of the personnel of the army in the field. Moreover, the satellite countries had put under arms 29 divisions (including 16 Finnish and 13 Romanian) and 16 brigades (including 3 Finnish, 9 Romanian, and 4 Hungarian) to participate in the invasion of the Soviet Union. These formations had 900,000 men. Thus, as a grand total, fascist Germany and its satellites deployed 181 divisions and 18 brigades—5.5 million men—against the USSR. These forces, prepared for a blitzkrieg campaign, were armed with 47,260 artillery guns and mortars, 3,712 tanks, including about 2,800 medium and heavy tanks, and 4,950 aircraft, mostly of the latest designs.[20]

At dawn on 22 June 1941 the main forces of the fascist German army had occupied their starting positions for the offensive along the USSR's western borders. The composition of these forces made it possible to create powerful assault groupings on the main axes.

4. The Concealment of Aggression Against the USSR

The concealment of aggression against the USSR started long before it was unleashed. The machine of political trickery and operational strategic deception began working at full speed when the Hitlerite leadership made the final decision to attack our country.

The Hitlerite leadership showed particular concern for keeping secret the strategic concentration and deployment of its forces along the USSR's borders. To conceal from our intelligence the real intent of shifting enormous numbers of personnel and quantities of combat equipment from the west to the east, the Hitlerite leadership undertook an unprecedented deception maneuver by making use of the state of war with England. Preparations were greatly intensified for invading the British Isles (Operation Sea Lion). To show off these preparations, the Hitlerite political and military leaders took three field armies (the 6th, 9th, and 16th) from Army Group A and, from the spring until the summer of 1941, organized a mass air offensive against England. The dates of the invasion were set and then put off until a later time, and the units were widely informed of this (so that the enemy would find out). In brief, everything was done to draw the world's attention to the British Isles and to convince the world that an invasion was imminent. In actuality, during this time German forces were being shifted east to the USSR's borders.

This was further covered by a peculiar political game, using diplomacy and Soviet-German trade and economic relations, that the Hitlerite leadership played with our representative organizations. Thus, in February 1940 and January 1941, trade agreements were concluded between the USSR and Germany that provided for the export of raw materials from the USSR to Germany and the import of industrial goods (machinery, machine tools, instruments, and so forth) into our country.[21] These agreements were widely publicized in Germany as an example of cooperation between the two countries, but in fact the German industrial firms received instructions to delay filling our orders and, in a number of instances, to refuse them completely.

During the Soviet-German talks in Berlin in November 1940 the USSR People's Commissar of Foreign Affairs drew Hitler's attention to the abnormality of such a situation, to which Hitler replied that "the German Reich is now waging a 'life-or-death' struggle against England, and Germany is mobilizing all its resources for a final clash with the British."[22] Hitler's reply was deceitful. At this time fascist German forces were already moving up to the USSR's borders.

Despite the previous agreement, many firms, under orders "from above," obstructed in every way possible the familiarization of Soviet representatives with German technological innovations. For example, a Soviet economic delegation headed by People's Commissar I. F. Tevosyan, which visited Germany in the autumn of 1939 to become acquainted with certain sectors of German industry (machine tool building, instrument building, and chemicals), was unable to gain access to a number of new types of instruments, machine tools, and models of military equipment because of artificially created obstacles. However, not long before the war, when Directive No. 21 (the Barbarossa plan) had already been signed, the fascist German command willingly acquainted Soviet military delegations, for example, with aviation equipment. The Soviet Union was even

sold the most modern types of aircraft produced by the Messerschmitt, Heinkel, Junkers, and Dornier firms.[23] In doing this, Hitler estimated that before the war, the date of which had already been set, the USSR would be unable to use the German technical innovations in aircraft building. But such an instance of "confidence" would, in his opinion, affirm Germany's friendly attitude toward the USSR.

Hitler's political duplicity was well known. But it would not be out of place to recall how hypocritical and perfidious was this corporal who had usurped supreme power in Germany. On the evening of 18 December Hitler signed Directive No. 21 (the Barbarossa plan), and on 19 December, in polite conversation with the Soviet ambassador at a reception, Hitler assured him that Germany had no claims against the Soviet government. At the same time, behind the smokescreen of peaceful statements and friendly gestures, the strategic concentration and deployment of the fascist German army along the USSR's borders picked up speed.

The political and operational-strategic concealment of these measures was carried out in two phases. The first started in July 1940, when the staffs and forces of Army Group B were regrouped from the west to the east. This included the staff of the group, 3 army directorates, 12 corps staffs, and 30 divisions.[24] The second phase encompassed the period from February through June 1941, when Army Groups A and C were redeployed to the USSR's borders.

In this phase the Hitlerite command devoted extremely great attention to concealing the aggression. To confuse the Soviet Union, major deception measures were specially developed and carried out. Among those that stand out were operations that were actually conducted by the fascist German forces as well as spurious operations that were merely announced but did not take place. The purpose of both stratagems was the same: to distract attention from the extensive preparations for war with the USSR.

Of course, operations that were actually conducted, such as Operation Marita (the aggression against Greece) or Operation Sunflower (the unleashing of combat operations in North Africa), were of definite operational-strategic importance for the Hitlerite command. They covered the rear of fascist Germany and made possible the extraction of material resources from the captured regions. But at the same time, these operations served a concealment purpose. For example, under the cover of Operation Marita, the fascist German command shifted forces from Army Group A to the east and put railroad operations on an accelerated schedule.

Operations that were merely planned but not carried out pursued only deception purposes. Among them, for example, were Operation Isabella (the capture of Gibraltar), Attila (the occupation of southern France), and Harpoon (the invasion of England from Norwegian territory). Under the plan for Operation

Harpoon, fascist German forces were actually concentrated on Norwegian territory; but this was done in preparation for the coming offensive in the Soviet Arctic, not for an invasion of England. Thus, Operations Isabella and Attila, which remained on paper and about which there was considerable talk at one time, were in fact purely deception measures. They were designed to demonstrate fascist Germany's supposedly unusual interest in Southwestern Europe, and, consequently, to distract attention from the transfer of fascist German forces to the east.

The Hitlerite leadership had at its disposal an extensive system for carrying out operational-strategic deception.

Organization of the dissemination of deceptive information was entrusted to the chief of intelligence and counterintelligence of the supreme high command. To transmit information, strictly assigned communications channels were used only under his instructions. He was also entrusted with control over the dissemination of deceptive information among the German military attaches in neutral countries and among the military attaches of neutral countries in Berlin. The staff of the supreme high command directed operational-strategic deception. The so-called department for the defense of the nation, which was the leading department of the staff, was directly concerned with this. This department was responsible for coordinating the concealment measures of the branches of the armed forces, particularly those for concealing troop movements, with the measures planned by the supreme high command chief of intelligence and counterintelligence. This department also had the right, with the agreement of the staffs of the branches of the armed forces and the chief of intelligence and counterintelligence, to issue instructions to clarify the purpose and use of various methods of deception, depending on the specific situation.

In the complicated military and political situation of the first half of 1941, when the Hitlerite leadership was increasingly moving forces to the east and deploying them along our borders, the leaders of the western powers, in waging a duplicitous game, willingly or unwillingly contributed to the concealment of aggression against the USSR. This was seen, on one hand, in their urging of Hitler to undertake a campaign in the east, and on the other, in their repeated attempts to set up talks with the Soviet government, purportedly on joint actions against the aggressor. Thus, the head of the English government, W. Churchill, in taking vigorous measures in the spring of 1941 to put together an anti-Hitler alliance in the Balkans, was more concerned with turning Hitlerite expansion toward the USSR than with saving the countries on the Balkan Peninsula from it. This can be seen from his note to Foreign Secretary A. Eden on 28 March 1941. "Do you not think it possible," he asked, "that in the event of the creation of a united front in the Balkan Peninsula, Germany could find it more advisable to seek its due in Russia?"[25] At almost the same time, W. Churchill entered into dealings with the Soviet government, asking it to provide help to the Balkan countries, but refraining from assuming any obligations toward the USSR

In bourgeois historiography, there is the story that W. Churchill, supposedly out of a noble desire to prevent a surprise invasion of the USSR by fascist German forces, warned the Soviet government about the aggression that was being prepared. But what did this warning consist of? "I have obtained reliable information from a trustworthy agent," wrote W. Churchill to Stalin, "that the Germans, after deciding that Yugoslavia was in their clutches, that is, on 20 March, began moving into the southern part of Poland three of the five armored divisions in Romania. At the moment they learned of the Serbian revolution, this movement was stopped. Your excellency can easily assess the importance of these facts."[26]

This message from the English prime minister, although close to the truth, did not have the value that it seemingly should have at first glance. The problem was that at the same time this information arrived, information was also being leaked to the German side, and of the opposite character: on the USSR's intention to undertake aggression against Germany. Here is what the American journalist M. Hyde had to say on this score: "For the sake of justice, it must be said that he (Hoover—Ed.) took part in the war from the moment that he began his cooperation with Stevenson.* It happened that he had been spreading false rumors and materials in the German embassy in Washington. Professionally speaking, these are called 'materials of strategic deception.' The Germans were handed a document that stated: 'From completely reliable and trustworthy sources it has become known that the Soviet Union intends immediately to undertake further aggressive military operations as soon as Germany is drawn into major operations.' "[27]

Thus, in planning the war against the USSR, the Hitlerite leadership devoted great attention to concealing the aggression by specially developing and carrying out a whole system of deception measures. This concealment was greatly aided by the duplicitous game played by English and U.S. ruling circles in international relations.

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Before unleashing war against the Soviet Union, the Hitlerite leadership was able to greatly strengthen Germany economically and militarily by using the material and human resources of almost all the nations of Europe.

The initial goal of the strategic calculations of the Hitlerite military command (the Barbarossa plan) was to put an end to the Soviet Union in one swift campaign. History proved, however, that these plans were built on sand. They collapsed in the second half of 1941.

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*The chief of English intelligence in the U.S. during World War II. Author's note.

The Hitlerite political and military leadership succeeded in putting into effect a series of political and operational-strategic concealment measures to conceal the plan for war against the USSR. Most of these activities were revealed by Soviet intelligence, however, and did not come close to producing the effect that the Hitlerite strategists had counted on.

In the complicated and troubled international situation that existed on the eve of the Great Patriotic War, the Communist Party and Soviet government, true to their policy of peace, attempted to avoid war. Nevertheless, they intensively carried out extensive military, political, and defensive measures in the event that fascist Germany should attack the USSR.

Notes

1. *Top Secret!*, p. 117.
2. See *Journal of Military History*, 1960, No. 1, p. 9.
3. Ibid.
4. See Muller-Hillebrand, II, 143.
5. Ibid., p. 139.
6. Ibid., p. 125.
7. See *Top Secret!*, p. 724.
8. See *Journal of Military History*, 1960, No. 1, p. 7.
9. *Top Secret!*, p. 78.
10. Ibid., p. 143.
11. Ibid., p. 149.
12. Ibid., p. 158.
13. Ibid.
14. Ibid.
15. Ibid., p. 143.
16. Ibid., pp. 150–151.
17. Ibid., p. 148.
18. Data from *World War II Outline*, pp. 139–143; *Great Patriotic War*, I, 383–384.
19. See *Journal of Military History*, 1959, No. 13, p. 59.
20. See *Velikaya Otechestvennaya voyna Sovetskogo Soyuza 1941–1945. Kratkaya istoriya* [The Great Patriotic War of the Soviet Union 1941-1945: A Short History], 2nd ed.(Moscow: Voyenizdat, 1970), p. 35 [Hereafter cited as *Patriotic War Short History*—U.S. Ed.]; *CPSU History*, V, Bk. 1, p. 142.
21. See *Pravda*, 13 Feb. 1940.
22. V. Berezhkov, *S diplomaticheskoy missiyey v Berlin. 1940–1941* [On a Diplomatic Mission to Berlin: 1940–1941] (Moscow: Izdatel'stvo APN, 1966), p. 40.
23. See A. Yakovlev, *Tsel' zhizni* [The Goal of Life], 2nd ed. (Moscow: Politizdat, 1970), pp. 247–248.
24. See B. Muller-Hillebrand, II, 83–84, 205–206.
25. Quoted in V. G. Trukhanovskiy, *Vneshnyaya politika Anglii vo vtoroy mirovoy voyne* [English Foreign Policy in World War II] (Moscow: Izdatel'stvo "Nauka," 1965), p. 162.
26. Quoted in Zhukov, p. 225.
27. M. Hyde, *Komnata 3603. Rasskaz o deyatel'nosti angliyskogo razvedyvatel'nogo tsentra vo vremya vtoroy mirovoy voyny v N'yu-Yorke* [Room 3603: The Story of the Activities of the English Intelligence Center in New York During World War II] (Moscow: Izdatel'stvo "Mezhdunarodnyye otnosheniya," 1967), pp. 98-99.

Chapter 8. The Soviet Union's Preparations to Repel Fascist Aggression

As a socialist nation the Soviet Union has always been the principal opponent of resolving international disputes and political differences between nations by military means. Throughout the history of the Soviet nation the Communist Party and Soviet government have attempted to establish lasting, mutually beneficial relations with all nations, no matter what their social structure and political forms of government.

These peaceable aspirations of the Soviet Union, however, have invariably met with resistance from the western powers. Even after World War II had already broken out, reactionary groups of the French, English, and American bourgeoisie still held out hope that they would be able to use fascist Germany and militarist Japan as a strike force in the struggle against the world's first socialist nation of workers and peasants.

In this situation the Communist Party, the government of the Soviet Union, and the entire Soviet nation were forced to devote increased attention to a major strengthening of the country's defense capability and to improvement of the Armed Forces' combat readiness.

1. The Nation's Political, Military, and Economic Preparations for the Approaching War

The country's preparations to repel fascist aggression during the last prewar years took place in an exceptionally complex international situation. The negotiations that began in March 1939 between the Soviet government and the western powers on organizing a collective rebuff to aggression did not bring success. The French and English governments refused to agree on joint actions to restrain the aggressive aspirations of German fascism. It became clear that if war were to break out with fascist Germany, the USSR could count only on its own forces. As always, the possibility that a united anti-Soviet front would be formed among the imperialist powers had to be reckoned with.

Our government had no illusions about the spirit or letter of the nonaggression treaty concluded in August 1939 between Germany and the USSR. Nevertheless, as already stated, this treaty played its role by destroying the hopes of

the western powers to isolate the USSR politically. Additionally, time was gained to carry out new measures to prepare the country for the approaching war.

The war in Europe that started on 1 September 1939, and Poland's defeat in that war, brought the military threat closer to the western borders of the USSR. This threat grew even more when the governments of England and France provoked Finnish reactionaries into an armed conflict with the USSR. As is well known, this conflict ended with Finland's defeat. According to the peace treaty, the border between Finland and the USSR on the Karelian Isthmus and the shore of Lake Ladoga was moved to the west. This strengthened the security of Leningrad—the cradle of the October Revolution and one of the country's major political, economic, and cultural centers.

The liberation of western Belorussia and the western Ukraine by Soviet forces, the voluntary reunification of these areas with the Belorussian and Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republics, the incorporation of the Baltic nations of Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania into the USSR, and the reunification of Bessarabia with Moldavia—these were all acts of enormous political importance. These acts further raised the USSR's international prestige and strengthened the Soviet nation's strategic positions on its western borders.

The neutrality pact concluded with Japan helped to strengthen the Soviet nation's international position and its strategic positions in the Far East. The agreement with Turkey to observe neutrality in an attack by a third party was of great importance in securing our southern borders.

The unexpectedly rapid defeat of France in May 1940 fundamentally altered the military, political, and strategic situation in Europe and led to a sharp rise in the danger of fascist aggression against the USSR. The tasks for the immediate preparation of the country for the approaching war assumed primary importance. Foremost among these tasks were reorganizing the economy to provide expanded production of combat equipment and weapons; equipping the future theater of operations, a large part of whose territory had just been made part of the USSR; revising strategic plans for conducting the war; and, finally, carrying out the concealed mobilization and deployment of the armed forces.

The Finnish-Soviet military conflict, and the experience that had been gained so far in World War II, showed that the Soviet Armed Forces required major reorganization and rearmament to successfully wage a major war against an enemy as strong and as experienced as fascist Germany. This took time, but there was extremely little left. For this reason, the Soviet government was confronted with the need to conduct a very cautious and flexible foreign policy—without allowing the Soviet Union to be drawn into war prematurely—and to make maximum use of the time allotted it by history to bring the country and the Armed Forces to a state of readiness to repel aggression.

In the last prewar years the 3rd Five Year Plan for national economic development, approved by the 18th Party Congress, served as the program to develop the nation's economy and to achieve a further rise in its defense capability. A distinguishing feature of the new five year plan was that in it, along with the accelerated development of heavy and defense industries, special attention was paid to creating a powerful military and economic base in the nation's eastern region. As one of the main tasks of the 3rd Five Year Plan, the congress ordered the creation of a petroleum refinery between the Volga and the Urals and further development of the Urals-Kuznetsk coal and metallurgical complex.

The program outlined by the party for national economic development was completed successfully. By the start of the Great Patriotic War, after 3½ years of the 3rd Five Year Plan, 2,900 new enterprises had been put into operation. Many of them were of major importance for defense. Allocations for military construction and the needs of the Armed Forces increased year after year. They made up 25.6 percent of the national budget in 1939, 32.6 percent in 1940, and 43.4 percent in 1941.[1] Because of this, the growth rates of defense industry production outstripped the overall development rates of industrial production. While the overall annual increase in industrial production was 13 percent during the first 3 years of the five year plan, military production rose at a rate of 39 percent a year.

But such growth rates for military production did not satisfy the constantly growing needs of the Armed Forces, particularly for aircraft and tanks. In September 1939 the Defense Committee under the USSR SNK approved a decree on the construction of 10 new aircraft factories and 7 new aircraft engine plants. In 1940 the aviation industry received 7 plants from other sectors, and new aircraft engine plants and enterprises producing aircraft instruments were built.

In 1939-1940 Soviet aviation designers developed new types of fighters, ground attack aircraft, and dive bombers equipped with more powerful engines. This made it possible to increase the speed, range, and ceiling of combat aircraft. In the first half of 1941 our industry produced more than 2,700 of these new aircraft.[2]

Great attention was devoted to increasing the production capacity of the tank industry. On the eve of the war new tank models (KV and T-34) were developed and put into production. However, by the start of the war, industry had been able to produce only 639 KV tanks and 1,225 T-34 tanks.[3] This production did not come close to meeting the needs of the Armed Forces.

A great deal was also done to improve and put into mass production new types of artillery and small arms. From 1939 through July 1941 industry produced more than 45,000 artillery guns and mortars (not counting 50mm mortars), over 105,000 light, heavy, and large caliber machine guns, and about 100,000 sub machine guns.[4]

Measures were taken to further develop the navy. By the start of the war, 312 of 533 combat ships laid down during the years of the 3 five year plans had been commissioned, including 4 cruisers, 7 destroyer leaders, 30 destroyers, 18 frigates, 38 minesweepers, and 206 submarines. In addition, the navy was reinforced with 477 patrol boats and a considerable number of auxiliary vessels.[5] The navy's tonnage rose by almost 160,000 tons from 1939 through 1941.

Ammunition production increased constantly. From January through June 1941 the output of the main calibers of ammunition rose by 66 percent. However, the calculated demand for ammunition greatly exceeded the production level that was reached. On 6 June 1941 the USSR SNK and the AUCP(b) Central Committee reviewed and approved a special plan for ammunition production for the second half of 1941 and for 1942. This plan provided for increased output of shells and cartridges.

An important event in party and national affairs was the 18th All-Union Party Conference. It again drew the party's attention to the need for accelerated development of the industrial sectors on which the defense might of the nation depended. The conference elaborated political, organizational, and economic measures that were, in essence, preparatory measures for converting industry and transport to a war footing.

The powerful military and economic base created by the efforts of the party and the nation provided the resources in the event of war to supply the Armed Forces with everything necessary. The Great Patriotic War proved this quite clearly and convincingly. However, at the start of the war the Soviet nation encountered difficulties in equipping the Armed Forces with new combat equipment and weapons. This was because the pace of the deployment of the Armed Forces in the last prewar years, and particularly in the last months before the war, greatly outstripped the growth rates for military production.

The completion of converting the economy to a war footing took place during difficult and unfavorable conditions at the start of the war. The military situation required an unprecedented transfer of industry from the western regions of the Soviet Union to the east. This greatly complicated the problem of supplying the Armed Forces and had a negative effect on military operations during the first months. However, by the end of the first year of the war, the Soviet people, under the leadership of the Communist Party, had successfully overcome the difficulties that had arisen. In relying on the advantages of a planned socialist economy, and on a logistical base built during the years of the prewar five year plans, by the end of 1942 the Soviet people had created a well-run military economy and had achieved superiority over the enemy in the mass production of modern combat equipment and armament.

2. Operational–Strategic Planning for the War and the Initial Operations

While consistently carrying out a peaceful foreign policy, the Communist Party at the same time urged the Soviet people to show great vigilance toward the intrigues of international imperialism. The party pointed out that since the Soviet Union was the forward detachment and shock brigade of the progressive forces of the world, who were conducting a historic offensive against capitalism, the Soviet people must always be ready to repel attempts by international reaction to use force of arms to destroy the historic victories of the workers and peasants and to restore capitalism in our country. The Soviet people, indoctrinated by the party in the spirit of socialist patriotism and class hatred for the exploiters, were aware that any war imposed on the Soviet Union by international imperialism would have a class character and would be conducted by the socialist nation as a just war pursuing the noble goals of defending the victory of the Great October Socialist Revolution. The Soviet people understood that in such a war the most decisive and uncompromising military and political goals would be pursued, and that these would demand the use of active methods of conducting combat operations and would place an enormous strain on the morale and physical well-being of the country.

The decisions of party congresses and Central Committee plenary sessions on military matters, and the speeches of the leaders of the Soviet nation, were filled with a spirit of enormous energy. For example, the AUCP(b) Central Committee's report to the 17th Party Congress stressed that " . . . we do not fear threats and are ready to respond in kind to a blow by the warmongers."[6] This same feeling was affirmed at the 18th Party Congress.

This energetic spirit was also present in the statutes of the manuals and regulations of the Red Army and Navy. The Workers' and Peasants' Red Army Field Manual (FM-39) stated that the "the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics will answer any enemy attack with a crushing blow with all the might of its armed forces. . . . If the enemy thrusts a war on us, the Workers' and Peasants' Red Army will be the most aggressive of any attacking army."[7]

The General Staff's calculations on the war plan were based on a consideration of the military and political situation, the requirements of our military doctrine, and the real capabilities of the Soviet nation and its potential enemies. World War II, which had already started; the changes caused by the war in the balance of forces on the international arena; the westward shift of the USSR's national borders after the liberation of western Belorussia and the western Ukraine; and the incorporation of Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, and Bessarabia into the USSR—all of this forced the General Staff from the autumn of 1940 through the spring of 1941 to fundamentally revise the previous operational-strategic plan for entering the war and conducting the initial operations.[8]

After Hitler came to power, Germany became the main and most dangerous enemy of the USSR. It was assumed that Germany could attack the USSR in alliance with the reactionary governments of Finland, Romania, Hungary, Italy, and, possibly, Turkey.

In the Far East, as before, militarist Japan was the potential enemy. It was expected that Japan could attack the USSR simultaneously with Germany, or, in holding a position of armed neutrality, could begin military operations later at any advantageous time. For this reason, the General Staff did not rule out the possibility of waging a war simultaneously on two fronts. However, considering the situation that actually existed, the General Staff felt that the European theater of operations would be the main one for the USSR, and that it was there that the outcome of the war would be determined. For this reason, in calculations on the strategic deployment of the Soviet Armed Forces, the General Staff foresaw a concentration of the Red Army's main forces along the USSR's western borders. In the Far Eastern theater of operations, only the forces capable of keeping the situation stable were to be kept in the event of a Japanese attack on the USSR.

Assessing fascist Germany's probable plans for unleashing war against the USSR, the General Staff assumed that during the first stage of the war the Hitlerite supreme command would most likely try to concentrate its main efforts on the southwestern strategic axis. Germany's immediate strategic goal was seen as the capture of the Ukraine and the Donets Basin with a later breakthrough to the Caucasus, thus depriving our country of major economic regions—Ukrainian grain, Donets coal, southern metallurgy, and then Caucasian oil would all be seized.

Nor was the possibility ruled out that the fascist German army's main forces would be deployed north of the Pripet Marshes for an attack from East Prussia and central Poland toward the "Smolensk Gates" with a further development of the drive on Moscow. In both versions the possibility was foreseen that the Finnish and Romanian armies would go over to the offensive simultaneously with the fascist German army.

It was assumed that the war would inevitably become long and tense, and the achievement of victory would depend, to a decisive degree, on the ability of the rear to supply the front with material and human resources longer than the enemy could.

The superiority of the Soviet governmental and social systems, their enormous potential capabilities, the moral and political unity of Soviet society, Soviet society's solidarity around the Communist Party, and the readiness of the Soviet people to wage a selfless fight for their socialist Fatherland—all of this gave the Communist Party, the government, and the Soviet command the right to count on the victorious conduct of the war.

Along with this, the Soviet Union's political and military leaders recognized that the results of the initial operations would have an enormous influence on the course of the war. Particular importance was attached to planning these operations.

The plan of the initial operations. On the eve of the war the defense of the Soviet Union's western borders, which stretched from the Barents to the Black Sea, was provided by the forces of five border military districts: Leningrad, Baltic Special, Western Special, Kiev Special, and Odessa.

With the start of operations the Leningrad Military District and the Baltic, Western, and Kiev special military districts were changed into the Northern, Northwestern, Western, and Southwestern fronts, while the Odessa Military District became the 9th Army.[9] Later, the Southern Front was to be deployed there.

The Soviet government, in the event of attack by fascist Germany on the USSR, made provision that the Armed Forces would make a powerful retaliatory attack against the enemy to repel the aggression and shift combat operations to enemy territory. Proceeding from an assessment of the situation that might exist by the start of the war, the General Staff drew up an operations plan under which our main forces were to be deployed in a zone from the coast of the Baltic Sea to the Pripet Marshes—on the northwestern and western axes. When, in September 1940, this plan was reported to the Politburo of the AUCP(b) Central Committee, J. V. Stalin expressed the opinion that the probable enemy would try to concentrate its main efforts in the southwest. The General Staff reworked the operations plan compiled initially and outlined a new one that called for concentrating our main efforts on the southwestern axis.[10]

Since accomplishment of the missions outlined in the plan was to be carried out by a retaliatory attack after the strategic deployment of the Red Army's main forces, in the first stage of the initial strategic operations the covering armies deployed in the border zone were to employ active defensive operations, supported by aviation and tactical reserves, to repel the enemy attack, thus securing the concentration and deployment of all the forces designated to make the retaliatory attack. The General Staff drew up a special plan to defend the state border. This plan set the following missions: prevent enemy invasion of the USSR's territory; use a stubborn and active defense, fortified areas, and field fortifications along the state border to cover the concentration and deployment of the Red Army's main forces; ensure by air defense and air operations normal functioning of the railroads and concentration of forces in the border military districts; use all types of reconnaissance to determine the concentration and grouping of enemy forces; use active air operations to win air supremacy; make attacks against the main railroad junctions, bridges, and troop groupings to disrupt and delay the concentration and deployment of enemy forces; prevent the landing (or dropping) of enemy paratroopers and diversionary groups.

If the front of our defenses were pierced by major mechanized enemy forces, provision was made for the massed use of mechanized corps, antitank artillery brigades, and aviation to stop the breakthrough. Under favorable conditions, all the defending forces and reserves of the armies and military districts were instructed to be ready on instructions from the High Command to make rapid attacks to rout enemy groupings that had crossed the border and to shift combat operations to enemy territory.

In organizing the cover, the Leningrad, Baltic Special, and Odessa military districts were to cooperate with the various naval fleets. The fleets were directed to prevent the unexpected approach of the enemy from the sea and were to use mines and coastal defenses to prevent the capture of bases from the sea and the landing of amphibious forces on our coast. The Red Banner Baltic Fleet, in addition, was to prevent enemy ships from penetrating the gulfs of Finland and Riga.

The General Staff worked out the plan for defending the state border in the spring of 1941. Under this plan, each of the border military districts was to draw up its own specific plan for combat operations. Such plans were prepared and, from 5 to 20 June, were submitted to the General Staff for approval.

Thus, according to the plan of the Soviet High Command, the immediate strategic goal, which determined the character and content of the planned initial operations, consisted in repelling the enemy's first attack by using the forces of the first strategic echelon (the covering armies and the reserves of the border districts); in reliably securing the concentration and deployment of the Red Army's main forces; and in creating favorable conditions for making a retaliatory attack against the enemy. This goal was to be achieved by winning air supremacy, by thwarting (or disrupting) the enemy's strategic deployment, and, finally, by conducting a stubborn and active defense of fortifications along the state border.

It was felt that both sides would start combat operations with only part of their forces, and that at least 2 weeks would be required to conclude the deployment of the Red Army's main forces and of the main enemy forces. There was a certainty that during this time the covering armies, possessing sufficient men and equipment, would be able to successfully handle the missions assigned to them—to repel the first enemy attack.

If the forces of the first strategic echelon were able not only to repel the first enemy attack, but also to shift combat operations to enemy territory even before the deployment of the main forces, the second strategic echelon (the Dnepr was to be its deployment line) was to add to the efforts of the first echelon and develop the retaliatory attack in accord with the overall strategic plan. However, this proposition—which was the basis of the plan for the initial combat operations—while certainly theoretically possible, in fact did not fit the conditions that actually arose. It did not give sufficient consideration to the lessons of the first

campaigns in World War II, in particular, to the fact that in those campaigns the fascist German army had made the first attack with its main forces, which were concentrated and deployed in the theater of operations before the start of the invasion.

3. Mobilization Deployment of the Armed Forces

The socialist nature of the Soviet system, the planned development of the national economy that was a result of it, the moral and political unity of Soviet society in closed ranks around the Communist Party, and the firmly established principles of democratic centralism in government administration—all of this provided favorable conditions for the mobilization deployment of the Red Army and Navy.

At the same time, the enormous expanses of our Motherland, the less developed (in comparison with Western Europe) railroad and highway network, and the recent and continuing strategic development of the territory of the western regions that had only just become a part of the USSR—all of this caused great difficulties in carrying out mobilization measures and deploying the Armed Forces in the theaters of operations.

The Communist Party and the Soviet government devoted great attention to improving the mobilization system in the prewar years. It was substantially improved because of the experience gained in the mobilization measures carried out in the autumn of 1938 (the "Munich crisis"), in the summer of 1939 (the events on the Khalkhin-Gol), in the autumn of 1939 (the liberation campaign into western Belorussia and the western Ukraine), and in the winter of 1939-1940 (the Finnish-Soviet conflict). The mobilization system was greatly improved when the Law on Universal Military Conscription approved in September 1939 went into effect. Under this law a reorganization was carried out in the military commissariats that made it possible to efficiently carry out induction into the army and navy and to mobilize the nation's resources.

By the start of the Great Patriotic War our country had a completely modern and flexible mobilization system. It had been developed with consideration of the changes in the organizational development of the Red Army and in full accord with operational-strategic planning. The last prewar mobilization plan was thus based on changes outlined by the 3rd Five Year Plan for the reoganization of the Workers' and Peasants' Red Army; in particular, this plan took consideration of the accelerated development of armored forces and aviation. In the spring of 1941, when our High Command's operational-strategic plan underwent substantial alterations, mobilization calculations underwent changes as well.

The expansion of the army and navy was seen first of all in increases in the number of personnel. By 1 January 1939 the Armed Forces had 1,943,000 men. After the start of World War II the size of the army and navy grew constantly.

On 1 June 1940 there were already 3,602,300 men under arms, on 1 January 1941, 4.2 million men, and on 1 June of the same year, almost 5 million men.[11]

The ground and air forces on the eve of the war were a part of the 16 military districts and the Far Eastern Front. In the western border military districts and in the Far East, the forces were organized as army formations. Before the war there were 14 army directorates in the western districts and 6 in the Far East.[12]

The Communist Party and the Soviet government, in considering the possibility of an attack on the USSR and the complexity of the strategic deployment of the Armed Forces with the start of military operations, planned and put into effect major measures for the organization, reorganization, and rearmament of hundreds of units and formations. While in 1939 there were 98 divisions in the ground forces, 2 years later, by the spring of 1941, there were already 303. Nine mechanized corps were formed in 1940. From February through March 1941 the formation of another 20 such corps and a number of other formations was begun. The Soviet High Command tried to ensure that the formations in the covering armies of the border districts had high mobilization readiness. These formations did not have to be created anew but merely had to be brought up to wartime levels in personnel, transport equipment, and horses; the motor and cart transport, under the mobilization plan, was to come to these formations from nearby areas. The weapons and equipment needed to bring them up to intended wartime levels were to be stored at formation depots.

Starting in the spring the High Comamnd was energetically concerned with providing the formations with trained reserves. The size of many units approached wartime levels. Thousands of men were sent to fortified areas in the border military districts.[13]

Thus, the organizational development and strengthening of the Armed Forces, in being closely tied to the mobilization plan, were carried out rapidly. However, the sudden attack by fascist Germany on our country interfered with the successful completion of the designated measures.

Our industry, only partially converted on the eve of the war to expanded production of combat equipment, weapons, and ammunition, was unable to provide the newly formed and deployed formations with the required quantity of motor transport, air and antitank defense weapons, communications equipment, and, particularly, tanks and aircraft.

This factor—the lag in weapons production behind the growth of new formations—was felt when the general mobilization started on 23 June. This mobilization was accompanied by an enormous burst of patriotism from our nation's workers and, because of the efficient mobilization system, was completed in a shorter time than planned. However, the rifle formations entered the border engagements with a shortage of artillery guns and air defense and antitank weapons, while the tank units fought without a full complement of tanks.

The situation was aggravated because, despite the accelerated deployment of the armed forces, a large number of formations were at less than wartime levels not only in combat equipment but in personnel.

Thus, under the wartime tables introduced in April 1941, a rifle division was to have 14,483 men, 78 field guns, fifty-four 45mm antitank guns, 12 antiaircraft guns (four 76mm and eight 37mm), sixty-six 82 120mm mortars, 16 light tanks, 13 armored cars, and 3,039 horses. However, on 1 June 1941, not one of the 170 divisions and 2 brigades in the five border districts was up to full strength. Some 144 divisions had 8,000 men each, 19 had from 600 to 5,000, and the 7 cavalry divisions averaged 6,000 men each.[14]

The forced retreat of our units from the border caused undoubted damage to the mobilization deployment of our forces. The retreat greatly complicated the conduct of mobilization in the border districts; mobilization was virtually stopped in areas directly adjacent to the border.

The surprise attack by fascist Germany on the USSR thus created exceptional difficulties in the mobilization deployment of the Soviet Armed Forces. However, because of the heroic efforts of our people, and because of the organizational activities of the Communist Party and its Central Committee, these difficulties were overcome in a comparatively short time. From December 1941 the level of industrial production, having been put on a war footing, began to rise gradually. This made it possible to supply the army and navy with an ever-growing quantity of combat equipment and weapons, and the number of new tanks, aircraft, guns, and mortars sent to the front grew steadily.

The army and navy were continually reinforced with new personnel. By the end of 1942 our country had exceeded the level of production of combat equipment and weapons achieved by fascist Germany, and our army had acquired enormous military experience. Well equipped and organizationally strong, it became a powerful force that crushed the strongest army in the capitalist world, which at that time was the army of fascist Germany.

4. Concentration and Operational Deployment of the Forces on the Eve of War

The Communist Party and the Soviet government, seeing the growing threat of fascist aggression against the USSR, tried with all their power to delay the start of aggression as long as possible to gain time to raise the country's defense capability.

It was clear to the higher political leadership that a war with fascist Germany could not be avoided, but it was assumed that war could be put off until 1942.

The then deputy people's commissar of defense, Marshal of the Soviet Union K. A. Meretskov, in retelling his conversation with J. V. Stalin at the start of February 1941, noted: "... J. V. Stalin commented that we, of course, would be unable to stay out of the war until 1943. We would be drawn in against our will. But it could not be ruled out that we would stay out of the war until 1942."[15]

This view determined the general direction of our party's military policy at that time. It consisted in doing as much as possible to rearm the army and navy and to accelerate their organizational development and deployment, while, at the same time, using extreme caution in actions to avoid providing a reason for fascist Germany to provoke a war before our military preparations were completed.

"... Was our leadership convinced that in the summer of 1941 it would be possible to avoid war, and so, gain time at least until the following spring?" K. A. Meretskov wrote further. "At that time nothing was said to me about this. However, from my own observations, I personally concluded that our leadership was wavering. On one hand, it was receiving alarming information. On the other hand, it saw that the USSR was not fully ready to repel aggression. While over the last 2 years the size of our Armed Forces had grown by a factor of 2.5, there was not enough combat equipment. Moreover, it was partially obsolete. We all strove to influence the course of events, to shape it in our favor, and to delay the conflict."[16]

The Communist Party and the Soviet government, along with increasing the efforts to prepare the country and the Armed Forces to repel aggression, took measures to redeploy the newly organized and deployed formations to the western border districts. These formations, together with the main forces of the Northern, Baltic, and Black Sea fleets and the river flotillas, were to make up the first strategic echelon of the Soviet Armed Forces.

To conceal from enemy intelligence the composition and purpose of the formations being concentrated on the territory of the western military districts, many of them were a great distance from the border. Nevertheless, even in peacetime the foundations were laid for the strategic deployment of the forces in the border military districts with the start of combat operations. According to the plan, the troop grouping was set up with consideration given to carrying out defensive missions at the start of the war and offensive missions soon after.

In the spring of 1941 the alarming signs that fascist German forces were concentrating on Polish territory adjacent to the Soviet Union's border, and that Finnish and Romanian army forces were assembling in the border regions, grew more frequent.

In May 1941, under the plan for defending the state border, major new troop regroupings were undertaken for the Western theater of operations. These

movements affected both the internal and border military districts. Starting in mid-May, four armies and one rifle corps began to move up from the internal military districts to the line of the Dnepr and Western Dvina.*

The shift of forces from internal districts was carried out by rail in a concealed manner and without disrupting the peacetime traffic schedule. The forces were to complete their concentration in the previously designated regions from 1 June through 10 July 1941.

Concomitantly with the movement of forces from the country's internal regions, a concealed regrouping of formations began in the border districts. Under the pretext of changing the disposition of the summer camps, formations were brought closer to the border. Some of them were moved by rail, which was again done without disrupting the peacetime traffic schedule. Most of the units moved in a march formation at night. On 15 June more than one-half of all the divisions in the reserve of the western military districts were in motion. Many of the units being shifted were moved to areas 20 to 80 km away from the state border.

The formations in the first echelon of the covering armies, which were 10 to 20 km from the border, were not moved at this time. The People's Commissar of Defense warned the commanders of the military districts that the movement of troops up to the border could be done only by special order.†

The prohibition against moving forces up to or near the border was dictated again by our government's desire not to provide the German leaders with grounds for accusing the USSR of aggressive intentions and provoking a war. Our government was still hoping to draw out the time of the unleashing of fascist German aggression against the Soviet Union. Howeve., by mid-June, the situation was taking shape in such a manner that war with Germany could not be avoided for even the briefest period.

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*The 22nd Army moved from the Ural District to Idritsa, Sebezh, and Vitebsk; the 16th Army moved from the Transbaykal District to Berdichev and Proskurov; the 19th Army moved from the Northern Caucasus District to Cherkassy and Belaya Tserkov; and the 21st Army moved from the Volga District to Chernigov and Konotop. The Kharkov District moved the 25th Rifle Corps to the west. At the same time, preparations were under way to redeploy the forces of the 20th, 24th, and 28th armies.

These seven armies (the 16th, 19th, 20th, 21st, 22nd, 24th, and 28th) made up the second strategic echelon. By the start of the war only a few units from the 19th Army had succeeded in concentrating in the designated regions, but most of them were en route or at their former dispositions (see *Patriotic War Short History*, p. 53; *50 Years of the USSR Armed Forces*, p 260; *Kommunist*, 1968, No. 12, pp. 67-68).

†Such an order, as is well known, was given on the night of 22 June, just a few hours before the invasion of our country by the fascist German army. However, many formation staffs did not receive orders to bring their forces to combat readiness until border engagements were already in progress.

From 14 through 19 June the command of the border districts received instructions to bring the front (or army) directorates up to the field command posts. At the same time, the rapid movement of forces toward the border began, but its pace did not meet the actual situation. Of all the border district formations that began moving toward the border on 15 June, only a few had reached the designated areas by 22 June. Meanwhile, during this period fascist German forces had already occupied their starting positions along the entire length of the Soviet-German Front.

Thus, the fascist German command, literally during the last 2 weeks before the war, was able to preempt our forces in completing deployment and thus create favorable conditions for seizing the strategic initiative at the start of the war.

Approximately a month before the start of the war, when the deployment of the fascist German forces along our borders was actually being carried out overtly, our command still had an opportunity to complete, at least, the deployment of the forces in the first strategic echelon. However, the decision remained in force that "...nothing is to be done directly in the border area that could provoke the fascists or in any way accelerate their action against us; measures needed to strengthen the country's defense capability are to be carried out, but these should not be discernible by German intelligence."[17] J. V. Stalin, who headed the party leadership and the country, in trying to put off a military clash with Hitlerite Germany in order to use the time to prepare the army and country for war, did not give his consent to bring the border districts to full combat readiness, feeling that this step could be used by the fascist rulers as a pretext for war.[18]

In his memoirs, Marshal of the Soviet Union G. K. Zhukov writes:

"The 1940 operations plan, which, after adjustments, was in effect in 1941, provided for the following if war threatened:

—To bring all the armed forces to full combat readiness;

—To immediately carry out troop mobilization in the country;

—To bring the forces up to wartime levels under the mobilization plan,

—To concentrate and deploy all fully mobilized forces near the western borders under the plan of the border military districts and the Military High Command.

"Putting into effect the measures provided by the operations and mobilization plans could be done only by special permission of the government."[19] As has already been stated, this special permission did not come until the night of 22 June 1941.

The completion of the operational deployment was also negatively influenced by an assumption, held by the People's Commissariat of Defense and the General Staff, that lay at the foundation of the plan for the first operations. It was assumed that initially the aggressor would invade our country with only a part of its forces; border engagements would take place, under the cover of which the mobilization and deployment of the main mass of troops on both sides would be completed. As the first days of the war showed, this assumption was not justified.

The grouping of forces in the western border military districts on the eve of the war. By the start of the war two-thirds of the forces of the western border military districts were in the 13 covering armies.[20] The Leningrad Military District (which became the Northern Front when the war started) covered the state border with Finland from the Rybachiy Peninsula to the Gulf of Finland (1,200 km) with the forces of the 14th, 7th, and 23rd armies. The main forces of the district were concentrated to the south of Lake Ladoga. To the north of Lake Ladoga the border was defended only on certain axes by troops of the 14th Army. On the Hanko Peninsula there was an independent rifle brigade. One mechanized corps remained in the front reserve.

The Baltic Special Military District (which became the Northwestern Front when the war started) covered the border with East Prussia along a 300-km front from Palanga to the southern border of Soviet Lithuania with the forces of two armies, the 8th and 11th. The coast of the Baltic Sea from Tallinn to Liyepaya was defended by two rifle divisions under district command, and on the islands of the Munsund Archipelago there was an independent rifle brigade. The 27th Army (six divisions) was in the district reserve.

The Western Special Military District (which became the Western Front when the war started) fielded three armies, the 3rd, 10th, and 4th, as well as the 13th—which was raised in the district—to cover the state border along a 450-km front from the southern boundary of Lithuania to the northern boundary of the Ukraine. Six independent corps, including two mechanized corps, were in the district reserve.

The Kiev Special Military District (which became the Southwestern Front when the war started) covered the state border on an 820-km front from Domachev through Sokal and Peremyshl to Lipkany. In its composition, this was the strongest district. Units of four armies, the 5th, 6th, 26th, and 12th, were deployed in the border area. Four mechanized corps, five rifle corps, and one cavalry division were in the district reserve.

The forces of the Odessa Military District were deployed on the maritime axis.* The 9th Army covered the border with Romania along a 450-km front

*On 25 June the staff of the Southern Front was created from the Directorate of the Moscow Military District; it included the 18th Army of the Southwestern Front and the 9th Army of the Odessa Military District. Author's note

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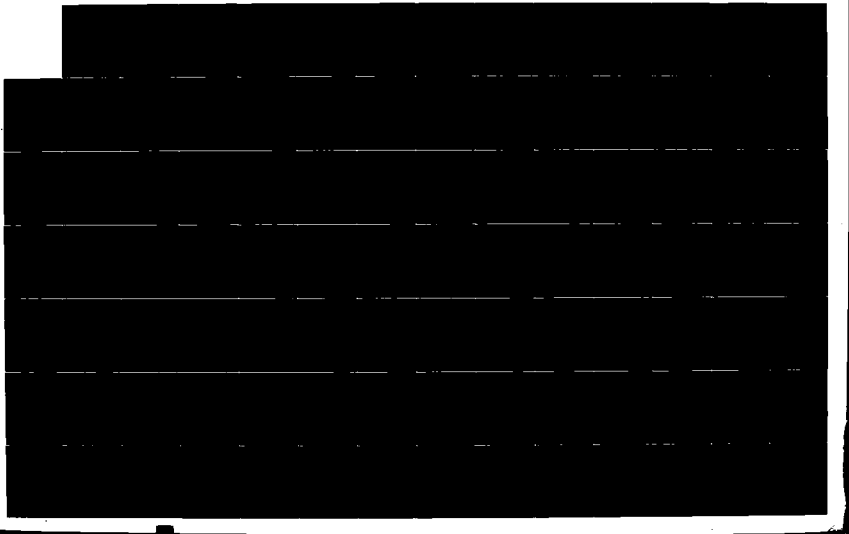

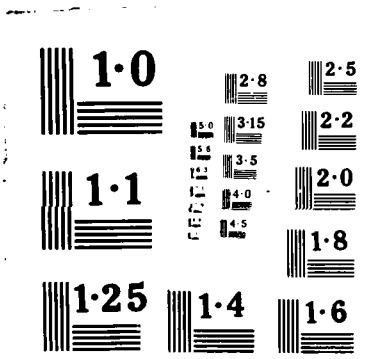
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from Lipkany to the mouth of the Danube River. The 9th Independent Rifle Corps was deployed in the Crimea. Two rifle corps were the reserve.

Organizationally, the Soviet naval forces in the west were combined to form three fleets, the Northern, Baltic, and Black Sea, and two flotillas, the Pinsk and Danube. They were based in their home ports and were ready to head for previously designated battle stations.

The covering armies were deployed over a great expanse both along the front and in depth. Of the 107 divisions that made up these armies, the first echelon consisted of 56 divisions and 2 brigades. These units formed a narrow strip that covered a front stretching about 4,000 km from the White Sea to the Black Sea. Many divisions of the Baltic, Western, and Kiev special military districts and of the Odessa Military District had at best one regiment each in the defensive fortifications along the border, while the remaining units of these divisions were in camps or military compounds 8 to 20 km from the border.

The overall depth of deployment in the formations of the covering armies reached 50 to 100 km, and the 63 divisions that made up the reserve of the border military districts were situated even deeper, 100 to 400 km from the border.[21]

Thus, by 22 June, the Soviet High Command had been unable to create the initial strategic grouping of the Red Army along the western borders in the form required by the developing situation. To a great degree, this also determined the balance of men and equipment in the border area, which was unfavorable for the USSR by the start of the war.

By 22 June the troops of the western border military districts and the fleet forces numbered 170 divisions and 2 brigades (2.9 million men), 1,540 modern aircraft and a great number of obsolete aircraft, 34,695 guns and mortars (not including 50mm), 1,800 heavy and medium tanks, including 1,475 of the new types, 269 surface vessels, and 127 submarines.[22]

The enemy surpassed our forces in number of personnel by a factor of 1.8, in medium and heavy tanks by a factor of 1.5, in new types of combat aircraft by a factor of 3.2, and in guns and mortars by a factor of 1.25. If it is considered that because of the incomplete deployment of the forces in the western border districts many formations were unable to take a direct part in repelling the first enemy attack, then the enemy was four to five times superior in personnel and modern combat equipment on the first day of the war on the axis of the main attacks.

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In the prewar years the Communist Party and Soviet government waged a persistent struggle to organize collective resistance to aggression and to prevent war as a means of solving unsettled international problems. The Soviet Union's efforts in this struggle, however, encountered stubborn resistance not only from such nations as Germany, Italy, and Japan, which desired to repartition the world by force, but also from England, France, and the U.S., which proclaimed themselves to be champions of peace but were in fact pursuing a policy of encouraging the expansionist aspirations of fascist Germany and militarist Japan. They attempted to set the aggressive nations against the USSR and to use them to wipe out the socialist gains of our country's workers.

Demonstrating wisdom and flexibility in their foreign policy, the Communist Party and the Soviet government prevented the creation of a united anti-Soviet front of imperialist nations, removed the Soviet Union from political isolation in the international arena, and extended the period of peace to give our country breathing space. The time gained was used to further strengthen the Soviet nation's defense capability and to increase its preparedness to repel fascist aggression.

The truly gigantic efforts expended during the prewar years by the Communist Party and, under its guidance, by the entire Soviet nation to prepare the country and the Armed Forces for defense laid a firm foundation for the Soviet Union's victorious conduct of the Great Patriotic War against the combined forces of the fascist bloc of nations.

During the heroic years of the prewar five year plans the Soviet people created a mighty logistical base to conduct the war. The latest types of combat equipment and weapons, superior to the best models of the capitalist nations, were designed and put into production by the efforts of Soviet scientists, designers, engineers, and technicians.

The Armed Forces, which underwent rapid development in the final prewar years, were not only provided with new equipment but were also fully manned with personnel indoctrinated by the party in the spirit of Soviet patriotism and aware of their historic international mission. The Soviet people were prepared to defend their Motherland's freedom and independence and the great ideals of communism with total courage and self-sacrifice. All of this permitted the party, the government, and the military command to count on victory in war against any aggressor attempting to disrupt the peaceful, creative labor of the Soviet people.

The plan that the Soviet High Command worked out to repel fascist aggression in accord with instructions of the AUCP(b) Central Committee and the USSR SNK was an active and energetic one and was in keeping with the spirit of Soviet military doctrine. Planning and preparations for the initial operations were based

on the idea of making a powerful retaliatory attack against the enemy. The entire system for strategic deployment of the Armed Forces was subordinated to this concept.

For a number of objective and subjective reasons, however—decisive among which was the error made in determining the time of fascist Germany's invasion of our country—the Soviet Armed Forces entered the war without completing operational deployment. The enemy was able to preempt our army in deployment and to achieve important, although temporary, advantages at the start of combat operations.

It must be remembered, however, that it was extremely difficult to appraise with sufficient accuracy the development of military and political events in the extraordinarily complex, contradictory, and rapidly changing international situation of the last prewar years. On no account belittling or overstating errors in evaluating events and planning the first operations, it can be confidently asserted that the Communist Party, our government, and the High Command did everything possible at the time to build up the nation's military might. It can be further asserted that, with the start of war, they managed to rapidly put the country's economy on a war footing, to complete the rearmament and reorganization of the army and navy, and to raise the morale of the people and their Armed Forces to unprecedented heights, thus creating all the necessary conditions for a crushing rebuff to fascist German aggression.

Notes

1. See *Kommunist*, 1968, No. 12, p. 65.
2. See *CPSU History*, V, Bk. 1, p. 124.
3. Ibid., p. 125.
4. See *Velikaya Otechestvennaya voyna. Kratkiy nauchno-populyarnyy ocherk* [The Great Patriotic War: A Short General Outline], p. 45.
5. See *50 Years of the USSR Armed Forces*, p. 225.
6. Stalin, XIII, 305.
7. *Polevoy ustav (PU-39)* [Field Manual (FM-9)], p. 9.
8. See Zhukov, p. 210.
9. See *Patriotic War Short History*, p. 53.
10. See A. M. Vasilevskiy, *Delo vsey zhizni* [The Cause of an Entire Life] (Moscow: Politizdat, 1973), pp. 106, 117.
11. See *Patriotic War Short History*, p. 53.
12. See *50 Years of the USSR Armed Forces*, p. 236.
13. See *Patriotic War Short History*, p. 53.
14. See *50 Years of the USSR Armed Forces*, p. 235.
15. K. A. Meretskov, *Na sluzhbe narodu* [In the Service of the People] (Moscow: Politizdat, 1968), p. 202. [Hereafter cited as Meretskov—U.S. Ed.]
16. Ibid., p. 206.
17. Meretskov, p. 206.
18. See *CPSU History*, V, Bk. 1, p. 153.
19. Zhukov, p. 222.

20. See *50 Years of the USSR Armed Forces*, pp. 251, 252.
21. See *Patriotic War Short History*, p. 54.
22. See *50 Years of the USSR Armed Forces*, p. 252; *Marine Atlas*, III, Pt. 2, folios 20, 22, 25.

Part III: Initial Strategic Operations

Chapter 9. The Initial Offensive Operations in the European Theaters of Operations

Fascist Germany, after unleashing World War II, employed aviation, tanks, and greatly improved methods of conducting offensive combat operations on a massive scale from the start of the war. This had a decisive influence on the character of the fascist German army's first operations and imparted new characteristics to such operations.

The nations subjected to surprise attacks were forced to resort to a strategic defense despite their initial military and political calculations.

1. New Characteristics of Offensive Operations

The military campaigns in Europe showed that the main feature of the fascist German forces' initial offensive operations was the defeat of major enemy groupings. While this main strategic mission was being accomplished, the seizure of territory and economic, administrative, and political centers was also carried out.

By creating a great superiority in men and equipment on the main axes and by making a surprise attack, the fascist German command attained in the campaigns against Poland, France, and the latter's allies, in essence, the ultimate strategic goals in comparatively brief periods. For example, in Poland the goal of the war was achieved virtually in one strategic offensive operation during which the Polish armed forces were routed and the nation was occupied. In Poland the strategic operation coincided with the campaign in its content, while the campaign exhausted the content of the war.

In the first strategic operation of the fascist German forces undertaken on the territory of Belgium, Holland, Luxembourg, and the northern regions of France, the main allied forces were crushed. Seventy of the 130 divisions that the allies had been able to field against Germany were totally defeated.* Enormous amounts of equipment, including artillery and tanks, were captured by the enemy.

*Twenty-two Belgian and eight Dutch divisions surrendered. Ten English divisions, forced back to Dunkirk, began evacuation to the British Isles. Thirty French divisions were routed. Author's note.

French air power was destroyed. Thus, because of the initial strategic operation, the fate of France was in fact already determined. The immediate consequence of the operation was a sharp change in the balance of forces on the Western Front in favor of Hitlerite Germany (only about 60 French divisions could fight against the 136 fascist German divisions).* The fascist German army achieved an overwhelming superiority over the French in tanks and aviation.

One of the main consequences of fascist Germany's first strategic operation was that, after occupying Belgium, Holland, Luxembourg, and the northern regions of France, Germany seized extensive territory containing economically important centers and regions. In reaching the line of the Somme and Ain rivers by the end of the operation, the fascist German army also occupied an advantageous operational-strategic position to make the final attack against France and to develop sea and air operations against England. Of course, the major defeat suffered by the allied forces, the surrender of Belgium and Holland, the departure of the English expeditionary corps from the continent, and the defeat of the French 1st Army Group—all of this had a demoralizing effect on the French population, undermined the will of the armed forces to resist, and strengthened the mood of surrender among the French command. The first strategic operation by fascist German forces in Western Europe undoubtedly meant the collapse of French strategic plans to conduct a static defense at the start of the war.

At the start of the war the events on the Soviet-German Front were on a different scale and had other consequences. The fascist German command was able to develop an offensive across a broad front simultaneously on three strategic axes—the Leningrad, Smolensk, and Kiev—and to carry it out in three related strategic operations. During these operations the fascist German army achieved major successes. However, it did not accomplish the main mission posed by the fascist German command: to achieve the complete defeat of the first strategic echelon of the Red Army. The Soviet command was able to save a large part of its forces from the first enemy attack. Another goal that the Hitlerite strategists were counting on also went unachieved—success in crushing the morale of the Soviet people. United around the Communist Party, the Soviet people and their Armed Forces began a noble war against the foreign enslavers with an unshakable determination to continue the struggle until total victory was reached over the enemy.

The scope of operations. One of the most important features of the initial offensive operations was the huge scope of combat operations and the great increase in the mass of men and combat equipment assembled to conduct operations.

*With these divisions the French command continued to hold the Maginot Line and created a new strategic front, the so-called Weygand Line, to protect Paris and the central regions. Author's note.

Even in World War I from 50 to 80 divisions—a half million to a million men, or even more—were used to conduct major operations at the start of the war. Thousands of guns were used in these operations. The scope of the operations was from 250 to 400 km along the front and from 220 to 300 km in depth. The average daily rate of advance varied from 8 to 15 km. For that period, when infantry formations played the main role in an offensive while cavalry divisions performed the role of mobile forces, these were rapid advances on a broad scale.

But all of this was greatly exceeded during World War II, when offensive operations depended on a much mightier logistical base (see table 16). While at the start of World War I the opponents had only a few dozen aircraft, which mainly carried out reconnaissance missions, at the start of World War II the belligerents already had thousands of aircraft. Instead of employing cavalry divisions as mobile forces, large formations of tank and motorized troops were used. Immeasurably more tanks and transport units took part in combat operations. The quantity of artillery rose greatly, and its firepower and mobility grew. All of this caused a sharp increase in the scope of operations.

The initial operations of the fascist German armed forces in the campaigns against Poland, France, and the USSR were carried out within the overall strategic offensive, which developed from the start on previously selected axes of the main attacks that encompassed a large part of the strategic front.

The strategic offensive in Poland was undertaken by two army groups—North and South—and was conducted along a front running the entire 1,400-km length of the German-Polish border. Each of the army groups had an offensive area of up to 700 km, and the breakthrough of the front was carried out in several sectors across an area extending 110 to 270 km. The depth of the operations of the army groups advancing from Silesia and Pomerania, as well as from East Prussia, was 250 to 280 km. The overall depth of the advance of fascist German forces during a campaign (or strategic operation) reached 350 to 400 km. It took about a month to conduct the entire strategic operation in Poland, and the active offensive lasted 17 days. During this time the rate of advance averaged 20 to 24 km per day.

To conduct the first strategic operation in the west against France and its allies, the fascist German forces were deployed in three army groups in a zone up to 1,000 km wide. The front of the offensive was 570 km across. Army Group A, the strongest army group and the one that made the main attack, occupied a front of 170 km. Army Group B, advancing on a secondary axis, deployed in an area up to 400 km across. Army Group C, performing the role of a holding force, fought in an area 350 km wide.

Table 16.

	World War I		World War II (offensive fascist German operations)		
	Galician operation on Southwestern Front in 1914	Border engagements and German troop offensive in 1914	In Poland in 1939	In Western Europe in 1940	On Soviet–German Front in three initial operations of 1941*
A					
Men and equipment					
Total divisions	46	77	54	117	167.5
Tank and motorized	—	—	11	17	32
Cavalry	12.5	9	—	—	—
Total personnel, thousands	—	1,100	1,300	2,800	4,900
Guns and mortars	—	5,000	10,000	21,000	42,600
Tanks	—	—	2,000	2,580	3,702
Aircraft	—	—	1,800	3,800	4,200
B					
Scope of operations					
Front of offensive, km	400	250	700	570	2,050
Depth of operations,** km	280-300	220-250	350-400	320-350	450-600
Duration of operations, days	35	16	17	18	20
Average rate of advance, km	8-8.5	13-15	20-24	18-20	20-30

*The enemy forces have been considered on the main strategic axes between the Baltic and Black seas.

**The depth of an operation extends from its starting position to the most distant line from it reached by the troops.

The fascist German command concentrated the main mass of the tank forces on the axis of the main attack. Additionally, the tank formations were for the first time put into a tank group under a unified command.

In the strategic operation in the west the idea of massing men and equipment on the axis of the main attack was demonstrated more strikingly than in the war against Poland. And although here the fascist German forces encountered stronger resistance, the principle of massing men and equipment on the main axes, along with such factors as surprise in the attack and provision of superiority in men and equipment, made possible the achievement of quite high rates of advance. In truth, this was aided greatly by the major mistakes of the French command, which essentially left exposed the area of the front through which the enemy made the main attack.

The initial offensive operation in the west lasted 25 days, of which 18 days were occupied by an active offensive. During this time the forces on the main axis advanced to a depth of 320 to 350 km. The average rate of advance was 18 to 20 km per day.

For the invasion of the USSR the fascist German command deployed three army groups—North, Center, and South—on the vast expanse stretching more than 2,000 km between the Baltic and Black seas. As in the campaigns against Poland and France and France's allies, the command combined the tank and mechanized divisions in special tank groups, and then moved them into the first echelon to fight on the main axes. Four such groups were created. Army Group Center, the strongest group and the one given the main role in the strategic offensive, received two tank groups as reinforcements. The width of the zones of advance in the starting position was 230 km for Army Group North, 550 km for Army Group Center, and 780 km for Army Group South.

The surprise of the attack, the particularly full complement of combat equipment in the armed forces—especially in numbers of tanks and aircraft—and the massed use of forces on the main axes made possible the great scope of the initial operations on the Soviet-German Front as well. During 3 weeks of combat operations fascist German forces advanced on the northwestern axis to a depth of 450 to 500 km with an average rate of advance of 25 to 30 km per day; on the western axis they advanced to a depth of 450 to 600 km with an average rate of advance of 25 to 35 km per day; and on the southwestern axis they advanced to a depth of 300 to 350 km with an average rate of advance of 16 to 20 km per day.

The Red Army's resistance to the fascist German forces was much stronger than that encountered in Poland and France, while the German losses on the Soviet-German Front were several times greater than in the campaigns in the west. According to the official, undoubtedly understated, German data, the Hitlerite army had lost more than 92,000 men by mid-July. Tank losses reached

50 percent of their initial number. From 22 June through 19 July the German air force lost 1,284 aircraft.[1]

The initial strategic operations of the fascist German forces on the European continent were thus characterized by much greater numbers of men and quantities of equipment assembled for their conduct, by an increased width of the active front of the offensive, and by a tendency toward a steady increase in the rates of advance and the depth of combat operations. At the same time, the duration of operations, in comparison with that of the initial engagements in World War I, not only did not increase but even decreased somewhat.

Forms and methods of conducting operations. The major operational-strategic successes of the fascist German forces in the initial operations were largely determined by the use of improved and, at times, new forms of conducting offensive combat operations. To conduct operations the fascist German command made quite wide use of such procedures as, for example, the simultaneous commitment of all the men and equipment assigned for an offensive, or, an attack on enemy forces to the entire depth of the operational configuration simultaneously with an attack against major objectives in the rear. Aviation and tank formations were employed in such attacks in a manner unseen before. Airborne forces also played a part.

Generally speaking, these methods of operations were not completely new, since they had been taken up in military writing and so could not have been unexpected. But their application on a large scale and in extremely close conjunction with one another still caught the defending side unaware. This always had severe consequences, and in particular resulted in the thwarting of a number of measures for the strategic deployment of the forces, the disorganization of military control, and the unorganized entry into border engagements of forces under attack.

The fascist German command took great care in trying to use the most effective forms to develop the offensive. The "idee fixe" of the Hitlerite military command was the desire to create "new Cannae" at the strategic and operational level, that is, the desire to develop the offensive with the expectation of encircling and destroying large enemy groupings. The offensive overwhelmingly became one of maneuver. While in World War I operations were mainly linear in form, and the enemy on the defensive had literally to be pushed out of all its positions, in the initial operations of World War II, by using tanks and aviation, the fascist German command was able to split and break up the defensive front, to capture the enemy's flanks, and then to emerge in its rear.

To conduct offensive combat operations the enemy resorted to the use of operations to encircle and destroy enemy forces whenever the conditions for this existed. The defeat of the main Polish forces was thus achieved because of an operation designed to encircle the enemy. The operation was based on the plan

to make deep concentric attacks from Silesia, Pomerania, and East Prussia. The outer ring encircling the Polish forces was closed on the Bug meridian, and the inner one in the region to the west of the Vistula. A distinguishing feature of the encirclement operations was that, because of the massed use of large tank and aviation forces on the axes of the main attacks, maneuver proceeded with great speed.

Usually operations to encircle and destroy large enemy groupings were preceded by action to split and break up the enemy's strategic front. The encirclement itself was achieved directly either by carrying out a double envelopment or by cutting off defending groupings and pressing them to the sea or against any other natural barrier. During the campaign in Western Europe, after breaking through the strategic front (through the Ardennes to Abbeville), part of the forces of German Army Group A made a turn to the northwest to cut off the main forces of the allies and force them to the sea. This maneuver was completed on the 10th day of the operation 180 to 200 km from the border.

On the Soviet-German Front the attack by Army Group North on Daugavpils and Pskov pursued the goal of cutting off the forces of the Northwestern Front from the main forces of the Red Army. But while in northern France the fascist German command had succeeded in such a maneuver, in the Soviet Baltic it was not completed. After halting the enemy on the line of the Luga River, the forces of the Northwestern Front provided their Baltic grouping with the opportunity to escape the attack of Army Group North partly across the Narva Isthmus and partly through Tallinn by sea.

On the Soviet-German Front the fascist German command made very broad use of disruptive attacks and subsequently reached the rear of the Soviet forces with its tank groupings. At the start of the war the Hitlerite army was able to make powerful disruptive frontal attacks against our defenses and to push deeply into them on a number of axes on the Baltic, in the western regions of Belorussia, and in the Ukraine.

Usually during an encirclement operation the fascist German command assigned formations and operational field forces that would split the encircled troops into isolated groups or cut some of them off from the main mass of troops. Thus, on the 10th day of the offensive in Poland, when the maneuver in depth to reach the line of the Bug by assault groupings of fascist German forces advancing from East Prussia and Silesia was far from complete, the main mass of the Polish army forces had already been split into five large isolated groupings.* The forces of our Western Front had been split into three parts, when the fascist German

*Part of the forces of the maritime army (Pomorze) was cut off near Gdynia in the "Danzig Corridor" and forced back to the sea; near Kutno and Lowicz about 10 Polish divisions and 3 cavalry brigades were surrounded; 3 divisions were in a ring of German troops near Radom; the large Warsaw garrison was encircled; a large grouping of Polish troops, cut off from the main forces, was fighting near Lvov. Author's note.

formations succeeded in driving deeply into our defenses. One of them fought near Belostok, another at Volkovysk, and the third to the west of Minsk.

However, on the Soviet-German Front, both in these areas and in other sectors, the fascist German command was unable to create a solid ring of encirclement that would have prevented the escape of a more or less considerable part of our forces.

The fascist German forces' offensive operations during the first campaigns thus showed that the depth and pace of the operations depended not only on creation of superiority over the enemy in men and equipment and on the power of the first attacks, but also on what forms combat operations took and on how men and equipment were used in these operations.

2. Specific Features of the Combat Employment of the Services of the Armed Forces

From its start World War II not only quite clearly revealed the role of the new branches of arms—for example, the tank forces—but also substantially altered the importance of the old, "classic" branches of arms—the infantry, cavalry, and artillery. The combat employment of different services in the armed forces acquired characteristic features as well.

At the start of World War I strategic operations were carried out either by front field forces or by the efforts of several armies,* whose combat capabilities were determined primarily by the number of infantry and cavalry formations and by the degree to which they were equipped with infantry weapons and artillery. The belligerents had few aircraft. Tanks had just appeared on the battlefield. The motor vehicle had still not found wide application in transporting troops. Under these conditions a strategic operation represented the mere sum of army operations, in which the infantry played the decisive role.

In World War II the fascist German command, besides ground forces, used large masses of aviation and airborne formations, and, on maritime axes, naval forces, to achieve the goals of the initial offensive operations. The participation in operations of formations and field forces from various services of the armed forces gave rise to new types of operations. In addition to the front and army operations (in the west, operations of armies and army groups) and naval engagements that existed before, there appeared tank force operations (tank groups), air assault operations, air operations, and sea operations. As a rule, such operations were relatively independent but were closely intertwined and merged into a single strategic operation conducted in accord with a single strategic plan.

*At the start of World War I the supreme command in Germany led the armies directly. It did not have intermediate levels of command in the form of army-group commands. These elements were created during the war. Author's note.

Characteristic features of the operations of the fascist German army's ground forces. In the continental theaters of operations the Hitlerite military command assigned the main role in offensive operations to the ground forces. The highest formation in the ground forces of the Hitlerite Wehrmacht was the army group, which, as a rule, was deployed in a theater of operations, or on a strategic axis, and had great independence in accomplishing operational-strategic missions. It usually consisted of two to four field armies, one to two tank groups, and a large number of reinforcement units from the high command reserve. In operational terms there was one air fleet for each army group. An army group had 35 to 50, and sometimes more, infantry, tank, and motorized divisions, 9,000 to 15,000 guns and mortars, 500 to 1,000 tanks and assault guns, and 500 to 1,500 aircraft.

The field army, which was the basic operational field force in the Hitlerite ground forces, was impressive in its composition and combat capabilities. It usually combined two to four army corps and was reinforced with tank and motorized formations, as well as with a large quantity of high command reserve artillery. An army had 9 to 12 divisions. Possessing great striking force and high mobility, the field armies, with the support of tanks and aviation, accomplished major and diverse operational missions in the strategic operations.

The tank and motorized formations were the leading force of the ground forces in the Hitlerite army. The number of tank and motorized divisions in the army groups varied from 5 (Army Group North in the German-Polish war) to 15 (Army Group Center at the time of Hitlerite Germany's attack on the USSR). The largest number of tank formations was included in those army groups that conducted operations on the axes of the main attacks. In fighting on these axes, as a rule in compact groupings in the vanguard of the army groups, the tank and motorized formations developed high rates of advance.

The methods of using the tank forces varied. At the start of World War II, for example in the Polish campaign, the fascist German command turned over all its tank and motorized divisions to the field armies. Each of the armies received from one division (the 3rd Army) up to one or two tank (or motorized) corps. The 10th Army, which was to carry the main attack from Army Group South, thus had one tank and one motorized corps (two tank and two motorized divisions).

Before the start of the campaign in Western Europe, the fascist German command created a powerful tank group under the command of General Kleist that consisted of two tank and one motorized corps (a total of five tank and three motorized divisions). This group was to be used for operations on the axes of the main attack and was directly under the command of Army Group A. At the same time, certain armies, for example the 4th, 6th, and 18th, were given one tank corps each.[2]

The creation of Kleist's powerful tank group showed the Hitlerite command's intention to make massed use of the tank forces.

In the war against the Soviet Union the fascist German command went even further in the massed use of tank forces. All the tank and motorized divisions were put into tank groups (with two to three corps in each) and these were then renamed tank armies. Each tank group, which had from 800 to 1,200 tanks, fought on the axis of the army group's main attack. In certain instances army groups attacking on two axes were given two tank groups. Army Group Center, at the start of the war on the Soviet-German Front, thus had two tank groups. Each of them fought on a separate operational axis.

The massed use of tank forces made operations highly fluid and dynamic. A distinguishing feature in the use of tank forces was that they usually fought in the first echelons. This was explained by the Hitlerite command's desire from the start of an operation to strike a stunning blow at the enemy and to penetrate to the operational depth of its defenses in the shortest possible time.

Mobile forces were not usually called on to fight against enemy groups holding strongpoints or areas in the rear, or even against those that threatened with flank attacks. As a rule, the mission of combating these groups was entrusted to infantry formations of the field armies that advanced behind the tank forces.

However, on the Soviet-German Front the fascist German command had to make an exception to this rule. And so, because of the heavy resistance put up by our forces encircled to the west of Minsk, the command of Army Group Center was forced to keep the main forces of both tank groups in this area.

The decisive forms and methods of using large tank groups did not take shape all at once. In the Polish campaign and in the offensive in the west the principle of massing tanks on the main axes was not completely adhered to. Thus, in conducting operations in Poland, the fascist German command, after creating a tank assault grouping in the 10th Field Army's zone of advance, still distributed a considerable part of the tanks among the remaining advancing armies. This was because on the battlefields in Poland the fascist German command still feared a great separation of the tank formations from the main forces of the field armies. Often a successfully developing offensive by the tank forces to the operational depth was deliberately held up from fear that the enemy would defeat them with flank attacks or would cut off the lines of communications of tank groups that had pushed ahead.

In the campaign in Western Europe the combining of several tank formations to make a large mobile group under a unified command for operations on a main axis was undoubtedly a major step forward in the combat employment of tank forces; but during an operation, the principle of their massed use was repeatedly violated. Thus, on the sixth day of combat operations, when after

crossing the Meuse the enemy's strategic front was broken through and favorable conditions were created for a rapid breakthrough by the mobile forces into the rear, there came a strict order from the high command of the ground forces to halt the advance of the tank formations that had pushed ahead and to hold them until the approach of the lagging infantry. Kleist's tank group was subordinate to the commander of the 12th Field Army and was used for a joint offensive with the infantry. Moreover, one of the tank corps of the group was under the commander of an army corps, and he put the tanks in his reserve. This example demonstrated that the fear of finding the mobile forces isolated from the formations of the field armies during an operation still had not been overcome. It was not until the final stage of this operation that the tank forces were again put in compact groupings, after which their advance continued at high rates.

After the fall of France the fascist German command analyzed the Polish and French campaigns. Important adjustments were made in the methods of employing tank forces, and these were reflected in the initial offensive operations on the Soviet-German Front. Tank groups there received great freedom of operation. The gap between the forward units of the tank corps and the main forces of the field armies reached 80 to 100 km, and sometimes even more. In truth, the tank formations that pushed ahead often came under flank attacks from Soviet forces and suffered major losses, as happened, for example, in the region to the southeast of Vilnius and near Soltsy. For this reason, the fascist German command was also afraid on the Soviet-German Front of isolating the mobile formations from the field armies.

In the operational depth the tank formations, which on certain lines were replaced by infantry divisions, usually rushed ahead, preempting Soviet forces moving up from the interior in occupying terrain areas advantageous for conducting combat operations. The tank groupings' rapid penetration into the deep rear of the defending forces made it possible to attack approaching reserves, to cross large water obstacles from a march formation, and to seize communications centers and other important operational-strategic objectives. This method of operation by the tank forces was widely employed by the fascist German command to overcome the defensive zones in Poland, Belgium, Holland, and France, and to cross such rivers as the Vistula, Meuse, and, on Soviet territory, the Berezina, Western Dvina, and Dnepr.

The fascist German tank forces played a crucial role in carrying out deep breakthroughs and in dividing and breaking up the strategic front of defending forces. This role can be shown from the example of the deep divisive attack made by Kleist's tank group and, later, by the attack made by Hoth's tank group through central Belgium in the direction of Cambrai and Abbeville. The attacks were carried out by ramming through the opponent. This made it possible for the fascist German mobile forces, operating with active air support, to split and break up the allied defensive front, having deprived the Anglo-French command of the opportunity to organize cooperation between the separated groups

of the Dutch and Belgian forces, the French 1st and 9th armies, and the English expeditionary corps.

As for the combat employment of infantry formations, on the main axes they advanced, as a rule, behind the mobile forces. Engaging enemy forces left in the rear of the tank formations, the infantry filled in the breaches in the enemy's strategic front, and, if possible, completed the encirclement, dividing and destroying enemy groupings. Motorized infantry formations, advancing behind the tank forces, reinforced and held the captured lines until the approach of the main forces of the field armies. Fighting on secondary axes, the infantry formations contained the enemy from the front, thus supporting the maneuver of forces advancing on the main axes. The repelling of enemy counterattacks was carried out, as a rule, by infantry formations with the support of tanks and aviation. The conduct of defensive operations by infantry formations alone was a rare occurrence in the initial operations.

The air force. The success of the initial operations in both the continental and naval theaters of operations was inseparably linked with the combat activity of the air force. Its particular importance in joint operations both on land and at sea was displayed with exceptional force. For the first time in the history of warfare the combat activities of the ground and naval forces lost their relative independence and became dependent on a third force—aviation.

The Hitlerite military command, recognizing the great firepower, depth of penetration, and maneuverability of aviation, sought to make full use of its capabilities in the initial operations. To a great degree it was because of the air force that Germany was able to achieve surprise in the first attack, to seize the strategic initiative from the start of the campaign, and to thwart or disrupt the deployment of enemy forces. Ultimately, it was aviation, in close cooperation with tank and mechanized formations on land and ships at sea, that gave the initial operations their enormous scope and swiftness.

However, the combat capabilities of aviation could be used fully only if air supremacy could be won and maintained. From the start of the war, as, incidentally, throughout the entire war, the struggle to control the skies was an integral part of any offensive operation. This was the first mission of fascist German aviation.

A second crucial mission for the fascist German air force during the initial period was to thwart the mobilization and deployment of enemy armed forces. Fascist aviation carried out this mission by making massed attacks against administrative and political centers, railroad and highway junctions, major naval bases, ports and anchorages, lines of communications, military compounds, and troop columns advancing toward the front.

Finally, fascist German aviation's third mission during the initial operations was to provide continuous support to advancing ground forces and, in the naval theaters, to protect fleet combat activity. After carrying out the first two missions, to which the first days of the war were allotted, the third mission became the main one until the end of the initial operations.

Carrying out this mission, German aviation covered the troops against enemy air attacks and conducted aerial reconnaissance and informed the command about threats of enemy attacks from the front or the flanks. The most effective method of assisting the advancing forces was with air attacks against advancing enemy reserves.

In the combat use of aviation, as in the employment of tank forces, the fascist German command adhered to the principle of massing forces on the main axis at the decisive moment. This can be clearly seen, for example, in the operations of Hitlerite aviation in crossing the Meuse River. On the morning of 13 May 1940 the German 1st Tank Division approached the river and began preparing to cross it. The division's artillery had fallen behind, and French units opened up with heavy artillery fire against the enemy. There could be no question of crossing the river until the French artillery was suppressed. By noon about 1,000 fascist German aircraft appeared over the battlefield. The dive bombers completely suppressed the French batteries, and so created the conditions for crossing the river.

Aviation also played a great role in battles with encircled enemy groupings, and in the naval theaters was decisive in the navy's success in winning sea supremacy.

A mere listing of the missions carried out by aviation during the initial period shows how diverse and, at the same time, essential its aid was to the ground and naval forces.

The airborne forces. The use of airborne assault forces in the first operations of World War II was as new a phenomenon as the massed use of aviation and tank forces.

The rapid development of aviation in the prewar years, particularly military transport aviation, created real conditions for the use of airborne assault forces. In the Soviet Union great attention was devoted to the development of airborne forces. In a number of major exercises in the Ukraine and Belorussia in the mid-1930s the achievements and enormous capabilities of the airborne forces were demonstrated.* At the end of the 1930s the fascist German command, making use of the Soviet Union's experience, took great care in preparing to employ airborne forces in combat operations.

*The English general Wavell, who observed paratrooper exercises in the Red Army in 1936, reported to the British government: "If I had not witnessed this myself, I would never have believed that such an operation was possible at all." (A. Govet. *Vnimanie parashyutisty!* [Attention, Paratroopers!] (Moscow: Izdatel'stvo inostrannoy literatury, 1957), p. 76.)

Airborne assault forces were used for the first time by the Hitlerite command in the operations to capture Denmark and Norway. These were tactical assault forces that, after seizing airfields, bridges, road junctions, and several beachheads on the coast of the North Sea, contributed to the successful landing of amphibious forces and the rapid advance of ground forces.

Dropping airborne assault forces into the enemy's immediate rear during the advance of fascist German forces in Belgium and Holland proved very effective. In Belgium the airborne assault forces' main goal was to seize the bridges across the Meuse and, particularly, Fort Eben Emael. Near the confluence of the Meuse and the Albert Canal, this fort covered the approaches to the bridges on the Meuse and the defensive positions of the Belgian forces along the Albert Canal. The successful operations of the airborne assault forces were a decisive factor in the rapid crossing of the Meuse, in the fascist German mobile formations' breakthrough to the interior of Belgium, and in the preemption of the Belgian forces in occupying defensive positions along the Albert Canal.

The airborne assault force that landed in Holland, despite heavy casualties and the loss of surprise, carried out its mission successfully. It seized several airfields, captured a number of crossings over the Meuse, Waal, and Lower Rhine, and prevented the Dutch army from organizing strong defenses on the eastern and southern approaches to The Hague.

The success of the Hitlerite army's airborne assault operations depended greatly not only on the actions of the assault forces themselves, but also on active air support. Aviation supplied the assault forces with weapons, ammunition, and other materiel when extended battles had to be conducted in isolation from the main forces, as happened in Norway. By making air attacks against the enemy, aviation helped to repel attacks in the assault forces' operations area, as happened, for example, near Fort Eben Emael. Aviation carried on the fight against enemy aircraft if they were interfering with the advance of the assault forces; in particular, this was seen in the aerial combat against English aviation forces on the approaches to The Hague.

The employment of airborne formations in Denmark, Norway, the Netherlands, and Belgium showed that the operations of even tactical airborne assault formations landed (or dropped) simultaneously in a number of areas in the immediate operational depth, or at a greater distance from the front line, assumed great operational importance. Combined with simultaneous air attacks and a decisive advance by tank and infantry formations from the front, airborne assault forces could thwart or disrupt the planned strategic deployment of enemy armed forces, disorganize enemy defenses, spread panic among the local population and the army, and ensure high rates of advance for offensive operations. When the pursuit of the enemy started, airborne assault forces dropped on the enemy's path of withdrawal gave great aid to the ground forces in completing their defeat of retreating enemy forces.

Specific features of naval operations. Because of the continental character of the engagements in Europe, naval activity during the fascist German armed forces' initial offensive operations (with the exception of operations in Norway) was limited.

During the Polish campaign the navy's main mission was to mine the straits zone. In doing this, the fascist German naval command tried to provide for itself freedom of operations to defeat the weak Polish navy and to block enemy merchant shipments across the Baltic Sea. Only once was the navy called on to support the ground forces. This occurred when the Polish garrison heroically defending the Hel Peninsula and the ports of Westerplatte and Gdynia had to be neutralized. To accomplish this mission, the old battleship *Schleswig-Holstein,* which had been turned into a training vessel, and a similar ship, *Schlesien*, were used.

Assistance from the fascist German navy to the forces advancing in the Netherlands, Belgium, and northern France was virtually ruled out, since the coast was controlled by the navies of these nations and by the English navy, which prevailed in the North Sea and English Channel. For the same reason, even during the final stage of the fascist German forces' May offensive, when the English and French units pressed to the sea were evacuated in hundreds of vessels from Dunkirk to the British Isles, the Hitlerite navy was unable to interfere with the conduct of this operation in a substantial way.

The fascist German navy also carried out limited missions during the initial period of war against the Soviet Union. Its main activity in the Baltic Sea was to mine the coastal waters of the Baltic and the Gulf of Finland. At this time ships of the fascist German navy did not undertake active combat operations in the North and Black seas.

Only the combat operations of the fascist German navy against Denmark and Norway were marked by great activity and decisiveness. They made up an important part of the operation by the Hitlerite forces to seize these nations, an operation that represented a system of attacks by amphibious and airborne assault units carried out under a unified plan.

The "Fifth Column." The Hitlerite military leadership assigned a special place to the so-called fifth column* in achieving the goals of the war's initial period.

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*The term fifth column was first used during the civil war in Spain by the Franco general Emilio Mola. Speaking by radio at the start of October 1936, he announced that the rebel forces advancing on the Republican capital Madrid from four directions (in four columns) would be supported by an attack against Madrid by Franco supporters who were in the city itself, and that this fifth column would be the first to start the offensive. Since that time the term fifth column has come to mean the forces hostile to an existing political system and operating inside a nation in the interests of a hostile nation. Author's note.

In most of the countries subjected to fascist aggression, the nucleus of the fifth column was made up of the German national minorities. Many citizens of German nationality in these countries were profascist and were members of the foreign sections of the Nazi Party. For example, in Poland, there were around 3,000 such persons, about 2,000 in Denmark, and about 3,000 in the Netherlands.[3]

In many countries that were the victims of Hitlerite expansion there were also a number of people from the representatives of the ruling classes, or merely declasse elements, who openly or secretly were supporters of Hitler. They joined parties and political groups whose activities supported fascist Germany, and they even had their own homegrown "fuhrers." In England there was the rather well-known Mosley, in Yugoslavia, Pavelic, in Norway, Quisling, and so on. Certainly, the Hitlerite leadership made wide use of such people for subversive activities.

Finally, the fifth column included German agents specially sent into various countries by the Hitlerite leadership.

The first operations showed that in the capitalist countries subjected to aggression—where many representatives of the ruling classes were more concerned about preserving their privileges than about the interests of the nation—there were favorable grounds for subversive activity with the most lethal consequences. This was particularly apparent in France, where profascist leaders like Petain and Gamelin actually betrayed the French people.

The activities of the fifth column caused enormous damage in Poland. This was manifested in the spread of false rumors, the conduct of major sabotage, and, finally, in active armed aid to the Hitlerite forces. Thus, the Polish Nazis, together with diversionary detachments numbering up to 5,000 men (disguised as miners and factory workers) transferred from Germany, seized a number of major factories and mines in the western regions of Poland during the first day of the war; the Nazi organization formed in Polish Silesia took control of Katowice even before the arrival of regular fascist German forces.

Local Nazi groups operated together with Hitlerite agents in Denmark, Norway, the Netherlands, and Belgium. They also carried out purely military missions: for example, they cleared obstacles from the Hitlerite forces' routes of advance, prevented the destruction of bridges, railroads, and highways, destroyed communication lines and centers, and so forth. Many of the local Nazis served as translators and guides.

The Hitlerite government's attempt to create a fifth column in the Soviet Union failed completely. The hopes of undermining the morale and political unity of the Soviet people were groundless. The Soviet people's great political awareness, their solidarity around the Communist Party, and their devotion to its ideas proved an insurmountable barrier for Nazi propaganda.

Subversive activity in the enemy rear is not a new phenomenon in military history. It has been observed in all wars without exception. But the scope and forms imparted to it by the Hitlerite leadership during the years preceding World War II and during the war itself were unequaled.

The war showed that this method of combat is extremely dangerous and must not be underestimated, but also that subversive activity loses its effectiveness when decisive measures are taken to prevent it and when the fifth column is fought by an entire nation armed with an awareness of its great responsibility for the Motherland's security.

* * *

An analysis of initial offensive operations in the European theaters of operations shows a great increase in their role and importance in warfare. The extensive use of such weapons as tanks and aircraft, and the decisive forms and methods of conducting warfare, led to a sharp increase in the scope of combat operations. During the first operations the fascist German army, which had preempted its enemies in the strategic deployment of their armed forces and had seized the strategic initiative, found itself capable not only of capturing vast territories and inflicting serious damage on large strategic enemy groupings, but also of actually removing entire nations from the war.

The first surprise attack was of decisive importance in achieving major results in the initial operations. All the power of the air and ground forces designated to conduct these operations and concentrated in advance on selected axes was used in such attacks.

Tank forces and aviation were the foundation of the fascist German army's assault groupings. Their massed and purposeful employment on the axes of the main attacks resulted in rapid breakthrough of a front's defense, its fragmentation or complete breakdown, and the formation of extensive gaps that the defending side was not always able to fill. From the start of the war combat operations became extremely fluid.

The rapid development of initial offensive operations over vast areas, with a front sometimes extending more than 1,000 km, led to a situation in which combat operations proceeded simultaneously in the border regions and in the operational depth hundreds of kilometers from the border. The solid front disappeared during the initial operations. To restore the front, the defending side, if it controlled sufficient territory, had to withdraw its forces to a considerable depth; there, at defensive positions readied in advance or hastily created, and with the help of reserves moved up from the country's interior, the defending side had to take organized counteractions against the advancing forces. The only country in a position to conduct this type of active strategic defense was the

Soviet Union, which possessed great territory, tremendous military and economic potential, and, most important, the moral and political determination of the people and their Armed Forces.

The series of initial operations systematically carried out by fascist Germany on the western and eastern fronts had tremendous strategic consequences. Poland, Denmark, Norway, Holland, Belgium, Luxembourg, Yugoslavia, Greece, and France were defeated in the initial operations. England lost its allies in Europe and faced the threat of an invasion of its own territory by fascist German forces.

The resistance offered to the fascist German army on the Soviet-German Front, and the losses it suffered in the initial operations, upset the Hitlerite command's strategic calculations. Instead of an unhindered advance into the Soviet interior, as provided for in the Barbarossa plan, fascist German forces had to repel powerful attacks by our forces on the most important axes. The idea of a blitzkrieg defeat of the Soviet Union collapsed. The war became a drawn-out affair; the attendant factors that had played a primary role in the initial operations lost their importance.

Notes

1. See *Patriotic War Short History*, p. 68.
2. See G. Boucher, *Bronetankovoye oruzhiye v voyne* [Armor in the War] (Moscow: Izdatel'stvo inostrannoy literatury, 1956), pp. 111-112.
3. See L. de Jong, *Nemetskaya pyataya kolonna vo vtoroy mirovoy voyne* [The German Fifth Column in World War II] (Moscow: Izdatel'stvo inostrannoy literatury, 1958), pp. 241, 257, 299.

Chapter 10. The Collapse of the Strategic Defense in Poland and Western Europe

Strategic defense was used by the Polish and Anglo–French command at the start of the war to repel aggression. The military doctrines and operational-strategic plans of these nations called for this. The actual course of events from the start of combat operations in Poland and in France, however, differed greatly from the plans and calculations of the Polish and Anglo–French commands. The defensive operations of the Polish and allied armies ended in a major defeat. For Poland this defeat meant defeat in the war; for France, it virtually determined ahead of time the war's outcome in the enemy's favor.

1. The Conduct of Strategic Defense by the Polish Army

The border engagements (the first stage of the war). The first defensive battles were undertaken by Polish formations, as provided for in the war plan, at the forward positions (the Modlin, Pomorze, and Lodz armies); but on certain axes where the main defensive zone ran directly along the border (the Krakow Army), defensive battles were fought right in the main zone.

From the first day of the war German aviation seized air supremacy. From the second or third day of the war German aviation's main efforts were shifted to supporting the advance of friendly forces and to thwarting Polish mobilization movements linked with completing the deployment of the Polish army. Polish rail transport was soon disorganized. There could no longer be any question of moving reserves up to the front.[1]

Because of the powerful surprise attacks by the fascist German forces, the Polish defenses were broken through on a number of axes by the second day of the war. The threat of encirclement was created on the flanks of the Lodz and Krakow armies, between which a dangerous breach had formed.

On the northwestern axis the main forces of the Pomorze Army were cut off on the third day in a narrow corridor between Pomerania and East Prussia, and the units that broke out began to retreat beyond the Vistula. On the Tarnow axis, along both sides of the Vistula, a completely unprotected gap was formed, into which rushed the forces of the German 4th Army.

The Poznan Army's front was also broken through. This army had been moved far to the west into the Poznan salient.

The Polish command's attempts to carry out the consecutive withdrawal of its formations from under enemy attack to the main defensive line was unsuccessful everywhere. The fascist German forces, superior to the retreating formations in mobility and able to move rapidly ahead in the boundary areas between the Polish armies, greatly outstripped the enemy. Under the threat of encirclement the retreating Polish units hurriedly pulled back further. Massed air attacks completed the disorganization of the Polish forces' retreat.

By the end of 5 September it was apparent that the Polish command's hopes of making an organized withdrawal of its main army forces to the main line, and then to hold that line even temporarily until the strategic reserves had completed their deployment, were not to be realized. By that time each of the armies, encircled by the enemy on both flanks, was fighting out of contact with the adjacent armies.*

The disruption of communications with the staffs and the troops, already felt during the first days of the war, assumed threatening proportions. The development of events and the combat activity of the troops escaped the Polish command's control more and more. Only one thing was clear: the defensive strategic front in western Poland no longer existed, and it could not be restored. The Polish command's hopes to retain important industrial and agricultural regions on the left bank of the Vistula had collapsed. A major new decision had to be made that would provide for the withdrawal of intact Polish forces to the east to recreate a new strategic defensive front along the line of the Narew, Vistula, and San rivers. On the evening of 5 September directives were sent to all the armies with this plan in mind.†

The withdrawal of the Polish forces and the attempt to create a new defensive front (the second stage of the war). After the unsuccessful outcome of the border engagements, the Polish forces, under the directives of 5 September, retreated, attempting to occupy the defensive line set for them. However, this line had not been prepared ahead of time. It was under preparation after the

*On 3 September all forms of communication with the Krakow Army were out of operation from noon until late in the evening. On 4 September, for almost the entire day, there was no communication with the Poznan and Krakow armies. Later, because of moving the high command from Warsaw to Brest, commmunication with all the armies stopped almost completely.

†According to directives of 5 September, the Modlin Army and the Narew Operations Group were to fall back beyond the Vistula and Narew rivers to the north and northeast of Warsaw and firmly cover the right wing of the main forces withdrawing to the Vistula and the San River from the west. The Poznan Army, with the remnants of the Pomorze Army, was ordered to retreat directly to Warsaw to provide reliable cover for the city's western approaches. The Lodz and Prusy armies were to fall back to the Vistula in the zone to the south of Warsaw, while the Krakow and Carpathian armies were to fall back to the San. Author's note.

war had already begun. And since events were developing rapidly, it turned out that by the time the retreating forces reached the line, the construction of the defensive works along the Vistula River had not been completed, and the preparation of the line along the Narew and San rivers had not started at all. The situation was aggravated because the Polish command had virtually no strategic reserves that could occupy the new strategic defensive front ahead of time or at least cover the most dangerous axes. During the defensive engagement in the western regions of Poland, and during the retreat to the defensive line along the Narew, Vistula, and San rivers, the Polish command repeatedly tried to make at least partial improvements in the strategic situation, particularly on the most threatened southwestern axis, by organizing counterattacks against the enemy. However, the Polish command's small reserves, which also included infantry divisions and cavalry brigades with little mobility and comparatively weak striking power, did not make it possible to put up more or less reliable opposition to the enemy tank groupings that were rushing ahead. In practice, these reserves were frequently used primarily to strengthen the defenses of formations in the first echelon and to cover gaps in the breakthrough areas of the fascist German tank formations.

To carry out the counterattack against the main grouping of the German 10th Army and against the 16th Motorized Corps, which was breaking through by way of Piotrkow to Tomaszow Mazowiecki, the commander of the Prusy Reserve Army had only one infantry division and one cavalry brigade. The counterattack was poorly organized, and the already weak forces of this army were split for operations on two diverging axes. Cooperation with the Lodz Army, on whose flank the counterattack was being made, was not organized; there was no dependable cover and support for the forces brought up for the counterattack. The counterattack in fact turned into uncoordinated attacks that could not have any noticeable influence on the development of events. The counterattack grouping itself was defeated and was crushed during retreat.

Nor were any important operational results achieved by the Poznan Army's counterattack, which was carried out jointly with part of the forces from the Pomorze Army. The attack was made from Kutno to the south across the Bzura River against the left flank of the German 8th Army.

This counterattack was to smash the northern flank grouping of the German 8th Army to provide better conditions for the retreat of the Poznan and Pomorze army formations to Warsaw. For the counterattack, a group was organized consisting of three infantry divisions and a heavy artillery regiment. The Polish formations began a surprise attack in an area 24 km wide on the night of 19 September, when German aviation could not prevent development of a success. In the battles that started on 10 and 11 September the German 30th Infantry Division was routed. The Polish forces took 1,500 prisoners and captured 30 guns. The units covering the left flank of the German 8th Army were pushed back several kilometers to the south of the Bzura River. However, the fascist

German command was able to rapidly move the main forces of the 8th Army and motorized formations from the 4th and 10th armies to the operations area. Soon after that the Poznan Army was enveloped from all sides by 16 German divisions and was forced to go over to an all-round defense.

From 1 through 17 September the Polish command repeatedly tried to organize counterattacks against the enemy, but these attacks, in taking the form of small-scale efforts, usually did not contribute even important tactical successes.

The Polish command was ultimately unable to create a new strategic front along the Narew, Vistula, and San rivers. This can be explained by a number of factors. The Polish army was inferior to the fascist German forces in maneuver capabilities, and for that reason its formations, still unable to escape the enemy attack and reinforce themselves on a given defensive line, again came under enemy attack. The enemy frequently appeared in the rear communications zone of the retreating troops, forcing them to engage in battle under disadvantageous conditions.

The air supremacy of fascist German aviation complicated the retreat. By bombing the retreating units, and by destroying bridges, roads, and ferry crossings, German aviation reduced the Polish forces' rate of retreat, slowing it noticeably.

The lack of strategic and operational reserves deprived the Polish command of the chance to fill in the breaches between the armies, to make sufficiently strong counterattacks against the enemy, and to take up intermediate defensive lines in good time. The frequent disruptions in communications between the high command and the staffs and troops, and later the virtual loss of control, greatly intensified the disorganization of the Polish forces' retreat.

The final engagements and the defeat of Poland (the third stage of the war). By mid-September, because of the deep advance by fascist German forces on the decisive axes and the breakup of the Polish forces' single strategic defensive front into isolated areas of resistance, the war entered its final phase. This was in fact the end of the German-Polish war, although scattered combat operations, often very fierce, continued until the start of October. This stage of the war was characterized by the complete disorganization of political and military control and by the virtual collapse of the country's higher political leadership.

The disintegration of the system of higher political and military leadership in Poland started in the first days of the war. The president of the republic left the capital on 1 September. On the next day of the war Commander in Chief Rydz-Smigly began to view it as a hopeless cause. On 2 September he let slip to those around him the well-known phrase about the inevitable defeat of the Polish army. Several days later he called the loss of the war a "fatal inevitability."[2] On 4 September the evacuation of state institutions, documents, and gold

reserves from Warsaw began. On 5 September all the members of the government left Warsaw, intending to assemble in Lublin. But this could not be done. Control of the country was paralyzed. Soon after that the government fled abroad.

The disorganization of the higher military command was completed when the main staff of the Polish army was actually split into two leadership organs after the commander in chief and a group of general staff officers left for Brest on the night of 7 September while the chief of the main staff and a few officers remained in Warsaw. The staff of the commander in chief in Brest proved ineffective, as it had no reliable communications with the troops. Its last general command was the order of 10 September to concentrate the retreating forces in the southeast of the country to create a new defensive front close to the border with Romania. But this command could not be carried out, since the fascist German mobile formations, after breaking through into Galicia, once again blocked the path for the retreat of the Polish forces.

By mid-September the Polish army no longer existed as a unified whole. However, in various regions of Poland, particularly around cities and industrial centers, there were still a number of so-called hot spots in which Polish forces and members of the local population showed heroic resistance to the aggressor. Some of these hot spots had large garrisons that fought stubbornly and long, tying down large enemy forces, as happened, for example, at Kutno, Warsaw, Radom, and Demblin. Smal' detachments, with rare exceptions, ceased to exist after 1 to 2 days.

The garrisons of the Hel Peninsula and the town of Westerplatte put up heroic resistance to the fascist German invaders. The Hel defenders showed particular courage. Their garrison was surrounded much earlier than the others, but, in fighting wholeheartedly against the enemy, was the last to stop its resistance.

The most vivid example of the heroic struggle of the Polish people against the Hitlerite invasion was the 20-day defense of Poland's capital, Warsaw. The regular troop units and all able members of the city's population participated actively in this struggle, which was fierce and stubborn. The enemy concentrated hundreds of artillery pieces around Warsaw and continuously bombed the Polish capital from the air. Several times the city's defenders drove off general assaults. The city was destroyed and burned. The population was left without water and light, but the struggle continued. And it wasn't until 28 September, when virtually all of Poland had been occupied, that Warsaw ceased to resist.

Polish communists fought in the front ranks of the fighters for the national independence of Poland. They believed firmly in the ability of the Polish people to resist the occupiers, and in Polish courage and tenacity. After Poland's defeat they did not lay down their arms. "The war has not ended," one of the leaders of the Polish proletariat, Marceli Nowatko, stated in September 1939.

"New forces must be organized against the occupiers to struggle for a democratic people's Poland."[3] The Polish communists raised their people to a merciless struggle against fascist tyranny. Under the severe conditions of the deep underground they honorably carried the banner of the liberation of their country and made a worthy contribution to the defeat of German fascism.

2. The Conduct of Strategic Defense by the Allied Armies in the Netherlands, Belgium, and Northern France

The border engagements (the first stage of the operation). The invasion of Belgium and the Netherlands by fascist German forces began at 0530 hours on 10 May. At 0600 hours the Belgian and Dutch governments appealed to the allies for aid to repel the aggression.

The powerful attacks made by fascist Germany on the morning of 10 May against northern Belgium and the Netherlands were, in the opinion of the French high command, another confirmation of the validity of its prediction about the direction of the main enemy attack and the effectiveness of the strategic deployment of the French armed forces already carried out. For this reason, without any hesitation, at 0630 hours the French command gave the order to put the Dyle plan into operation. Thus, a new page was opened in the war in Western Europe.

The forward detachments of the French armies, which consisted of cavalry and light mechanized divisions, began the planned maneuver march immediately after the order.

According to the calculations of the French command, 5 days would be required for the complete concentration and deployment of the main forces in the 1st Army Group on the line of Antwerp, the Dyle River, Wavre, Namur, and the Meuse River. This time, it was assumed, would be won by the Dutch and Belgian forces in the battles to hold the forward border fortifications. However, these plans of the French command collapsed. The Dutch and Belgian forces began a rapid retreat, shaken by powerful enemy air attacks and by enemy attacks from the front, as well as by airborne assault operations in the rear. By the evening of 10 May the Belgian general staff decided to pull the army back to the line of Antwerp and Louvain—to the very line where the deployment of the main allied forces was planned.

In the following 4 days the events on the left wing of the Northeastern Front developed with unexpected speed for the French command. The command of German Army Group B, by decisive operations of mobile forces and infantry formations, paralyzed the resistance of the Dutch and Belgian armies and focused all its efforts on reaching the line of the Dyle River ahead of the French forces and then forcing them into a meeting engagement under disadvantageous conditions.

On 15 May the Dutch army, cut off from the allied armies and without hope of aid from them, surrendered. This had severe consequences for the defenses of the allied armies. The command of German Army Group B, having redeployed the 18th Army, which had been freed from combat against Dutch forces to the south, descended with all its forces on the French, English, and Belgian forces that had reached the Dyle River. Heavy battles began under conditions extremely unfavorable for the allied forces. The line on which the French command had placed such great hopes was poorly equipped with field fortifications. The troops went over to the defensive hurriedly, without having completed deployment. It was difficult to make effective counterattacks and to repel enemy tank attacks because the allied command did not have large mobile formations and powerful antitank reserves. A large number of combat aircraft had also been knocked out by the first attacks made by fascist German aviation against the French airfields, and German aviation gained almost complete air supremacy.

The strength of resistance of the allied armies was weakened by the virtual absence of cooperation between the French, English, and Belgian forces. The French supreme command, which had lost control over the course of events, could no longer direct the combat activity of the forces of the Northeastern Front, having put the responsibility for coordinating the operations of the allied armies on the front's commander, General Georges; he, in turn, gave this responsibility to the commander of the 1st Army Group, General Billotte. But in practice, this did little to establish cooperation between the allied forces. The command of each national army was guided by its own considerations in its actions. Not until 12 May was there a joint meeting of the representatives of the allied forces; there the necessity was recognized of putting the leadership of the national armies under the French command. But it was already too late.

At the time when all the attention of the French command was focused on its northern flank—on the events in Holland and in northern and central Belgium—the catastrophe in the Ardennes occurred. On the right wing of the French 1st Army Group, in the operations zone of its weakest 9th and 2nd armies—where the buildup of major enemy efforts was least expected—the fascist German forces made a powerful attack. All the strategic calculations of the French command were shattered. A large enemy grouping, after crossing the forested mountains of the Ardennes, began an offensive between the 1st and 2nd armies. The right wing of the 1st Army Group was attacked by four German tank corps, of which three (seven tank and three motorized divisions) were aimed directly at the weakest link in the French defenses—the defensive zone of the 9th Army.

The announcement of the appearance of hundreds of fascist German tanks in the zone of the 9th Army caused complete confusion at French headquarters. Only then did the French command understand how wrong it had been in assessing the direction of the main attack by the Hitlerite army.

Without waiting for the approach of the artillery and the main forces of the tank corps, which were stretched over an enormous distance from the Rhine

to the Meuse,* the fascist German command unleashed concentrated air attacks against the positions of the French 9th and 2nd armies. For 8 hours on 13 May, 12 squadrons of dive bombers continuously attacked the French positions on the front line and in the depth of the defenses, after which tank formations began to cross the Meuse.

The scattered counterattacks on 14 May by formations of the French 2nd and 9th armies and the French 3rd Armored Division, and the attacks by the limited forces of English and French aviation, were unable to substantially influence the operations of the German tank formations. By 15 May these formations had crossed the Meuse on the entire front from Sedan to Namur, crushed the resistance of the 9th Army, captured a broad bridgehead on the left bank of the river, and, no longer encountering any organized resistance, moved rapidly westward.

The events of the first days of the war opened the eyes of the French command to the errors in its strategic plans and strategic deployment of its forces. Here was fully seen the French command's bias in assessing probable enemy operations, along with all the inevitable consequences of this bias, for example, the even distribution of strategic reserves along the entire front. Such a distribution deprived the French command of the ability to reorganize rapidly to solve unforeseen strategic problems. The border engagements showed that to correct mistakes of strategic deployment in a dynamic, fluid war was virtually impossible.

The events of the first days of the war disclosed major flaws in the system of coalition command and control. The sluggishness of the bureaucracy in the French high command, which, although belatedly, was entrusted with coordinating the efforts of the allied armies; the multiplicity of intermediate levels in the strategic and operational control of the troops; and the numerous levels for coordinating various decisions between the allied governments and military commands that often could not stand delay—all of this ruled out a flexible response by the coalition command to the rapidly changing situation, and efficiency on its part in taking retaliatory measures against threatening enemy operations.†

*As Tippelskirk attests, "During the offensive the mobile formations were greatly extended. Their rear guard, and the motorized divisions following them, were still along the Rhine, while the advance units had already reached the Meuse" (see K. Tippelskirk, *Istoriya vtoroy mirovoy voyny* [History of World War II] (Moscow: Izdatel'stvo inostrannoy literatury, 1956), p. 76).

†Thus, French aviation was completely under the chief of staff of the French air force. For any army commander to summon aircraft to repel an enemy attack, it was necessary to turn to the commander of the army group, who would send a request to the commander of the Northeastern Front; the latter, in turn, would make contact with the commander in chief, who would give the orders to the chief of staff of the air force. To summon English aviation from the expeditionary corps for aid, it was necessary to pass through many levels of command to the commander of English aviation, who was on the continent; to summon English aviation stationed at airfields in England, a request had to be sent to the chief of the Imperial General Staff in London. Here it must be considered that the request could not be carried out in less than 16 hours (see Proektor, pp. 267-268).

The attempt to close the breakthrough and restore the strategic defensive front (the second stage of the operation). The sudden and rapid breakthrough of the 9th Army's defenses on the Meuse between Sedan and Namur and the rapid advance of the fascist German tank formations to the west required that immediate measures be taken to end the growing threat of the French forces' defeat. At the same time, there were no readily available men and equipment for this either on the threatened axis or in the immediate rear of the army and the flanks adjacent to it. Part of the strategic reserves had already been drawn into an engagement in the front's northern sector, or was heading there rapidly, while another was behind the Maginot Line and able to reach the breakthrough area in several days at best.

After assessing the entire complexity of the situation, the French high command immediately gave orders for the return to the breakthrough area of reserve formations sent to the northern wing of the 1st Army Group; the order was also given to shift reserve divisions from the Maginot Line to the line between the Somme and Ain rivers. On 14 May the high command appealed to London for emergency aid, having stated that French forces were powerless to meet the combined attacks of the mass of German tanks and dive bombers. On 15 May Daladier appealed directly to Churchill in a telegram: "We have lost the battle. The road to Paris is open. Send us all the aircraft and all the troops you can."[4] Churchill, obviously still thinking of World War I like the French command, stated that, judging from the war of 1914–1918, the Germans must halt for 5 to 6 days to bring up the logistics units and organize supply. And, in his opinion, the French must count on this in organizing to repel the German attack. Nevertheless, during the night of 16 May, he flew to Paris to discuss the situation that had arisen with the French government.

On 16 May Churchill and Reynaud met, along with representatives of the higher French and English military commands, and discussed immediate measures to eliminate the difficult situation on the front.

At the meeting no precise plan was worked out for further joint operations. Nevertheless, both sides supported Gamelin's idea, expressed for the first time at the meeting, of making a two-sided attack from the north and the south against the fascist German tank grouping that had broken through. This fundamentally correct decision was not, however, made more specific at that time, although the situation required that it be carried out immediately. Only 3 days later, on 19 May, did Gamelin fly to the staff of the Northeastern Front in order, after analyzing the situation on the spot, to lay before the front commander the combat mission derived from this idea. The mission was formulated in extremely general terms that made no demands on General Georges and gave him the right to make the final decision himself.

At this time, in the sector to the south of the Maginot Line, French reserve formations were moving up with intolerable slowness to the line of the Aisne

and the Somme. Up to 25 infantry divisions from the 2nd Army Group were to be shifted here. But their redeployment was delayed because of active operations by fascist German aviation.

The state of emergency in France caused major changes in the government and military leadership. Gamelin was removed from the leadership of the armed forces. Along with him, a large group of generals and officers was removed from leading positions. On 20 May Weygand became the new commander in chief. Petain was appointed vice chairman of the cabinet.

While these shifts in the higher political and military leadership were being carried out, while the reasons were becoming clear for the catastrophe on the Meuse, and while the possible direction of the further development of the fascist German offensive was becoming apparent (to Paris or to the north), German mobile formations, despite repeated halts because of the danger of flank counterattacks by French forces, were advancing to the west at a rate of 30 to 50 km per day. By 20 May they had reached Arras and the mouth of the Somme, having cut off the 1st Army Group from the remaining French forces.

During these critical days the French command repeatedly organized counterattacks against the German tank groupings that had broken through, but these usually did not produce the needed effect, since they were carried out without coordination and by limited forces and were prepared hurriedly and without proper air cover. The combat employment of the armored forces was also very ineffective. General de Gaulle noted in his memoirs that France had as many tanks as Germany, and while they should have been used in massed formations, they were instead scattered over separate sectors of the front. Even those armored formations that the French had were committed to battle unit by unit and were defeated by the enemy unit by unit. The 4th Armored Division under de Gaulle's command suffered this fate as well. Without completing its organization, on 17 May this division was thrown into an attack against fascist German forces to the north of Laon. If these armored divisions, de Gaulle noted, had been unified earlier, then even with all their imperfections they could have dealt heavy blows to the invader.*

Weygand, who on 20 May became the commander of the French armed forces (nominally he was also the commander in chief of the joint allied forces), was confronted with two main missions: to quickly strengthen the front's southern

*Three light mechanized divisions sent for reconnaissance to Liege and Breda, wrote de Gaulle, were soon forced to retreat and assume the defensive. The 1st Armored Division, which had been assigned to an army corps and which on 16 May had been thrown into a counterattack to the west of Namur, was encircled and destroyed. On the same day, units of the 2nd Armored Division, transferred by rail to Irsonne, were drawn into the general chaos as they unloaded. The forces of the just-organized 3rd Armored Division were immediately distributed between the battalions of one of the infantry divisions, and that evening were bogged down in unsuccessful counterattacks to the south of Sedan (see de Gaulle, I, 65).

sector; to rescue the northern group of forces. The immediate withdrawal of the 1st Army Group to the south, which seemed the most advisable to Weygand, could not be counted on for two reasons. First of all, he ran up against the determined opposition of the English government, which preferred to be on the safe side and keep its forces closer to the coast of the North Sea, that is, closer to the homeland. Second, as might be expected, this idea was opposed by the Belgian king, who was hoping, with allied aid, to hold the remaining part of unoccupied Belgian territory.

Under the existing situation Weygand had no other recourse than to carry out Gamelin's idea (approved by the allies) of a double attack from the north and south to restore the split front and to destroy the fascist German tank grouping that had broken through; such an attack would ensure freedom of maneuver to restore the strategic front, or, if necessary, to withdraw the 1st Army Group's northern wing to the south.

In the crisis situation, when the French command was vainly trying to unite the efforts of the allied armies to restore the broken strategic defensive front, all the thoughts of the English government were focused on rescuing its expeditionary corps from destruction and evacuating it as quickly as possible from the continent; the Belgian king, having lost confidence in his allies, was already considering surrender.*

On 21 May a conference was held by representatives of the allied command, but without the participation of the English. A decision was worked out to launch a coordinated meeting engagement by allied forces from the north and south against the rear of the fascist German tank grouping that had broken through to the west; this was to be carried out on 23 May (the Weygand plan).†

The English command, which did not believe in the success of the offensive and was preparing to withdraw its forces to Dunkirk, attacked the enemy near Arras on 21 May without coordinating the attack with its allies; the English command then planned to pull its units back from the Arras salient to the north. Although this attack was made with limited forces, it was successful, which was unexpected for both sides. The English forces advanced 20 km and took 400 men prisoner. The attack of the English units caused alarm in the fascist German command. The "crisis near Arras" was how the German generals re-

*In the existing situation, de Gaulle wrote that "centrifugal forces began to operate immediately. The Belgian king quickly began to think about surrender, Lord Gort about evacuating the English forces, and General Weygand about a truce" (de Gaulle, 1, 72).

†At this conference, held under the chairmanship of Weygand, agreement was reached that the attack from the north from Arras to Bapaume would be made by the English army and by the French 1st Army, which had each allocated two divisions for this purpose, while the French 7th Army would simultaneously go over to the offensive from the south. The support of this operation from the east was entrusted to the Belgian army, which was to replace part of the English forces on the line of the Schelde and to hold this line during the planned operation. Author's note.

ferred to this event.* Two tank divisions, a motorized infantry brigade, and an SS Totenkopf division were brought up toward Arras,† and these, with the support of dive bombers, first halted the English forces and then began to push them back to the north.

The commander of the French 1st Army, with no information on the results of the conference held the day before, ‡decided on his own initiative to support the offensive of the English forces. On the morning of 22 May the assault grouping of this army, without having completed its buildup, went over to the offensive to the east of Arras. But at this time the English units were already retreating. The hurriedly organized attack by the French forces was unsuccessful.

On 23 May, as provided for by the Weygand plan, the 7th Army went over to the offensive, attacking from the Somme to the north. By this time the army still had not completed its buildup and deployment, and so the attack was made with limited forces on a broad front. The attack was futile.

Thus, the so-called Weygand counteroffensive, on which the French command placed great hopes, did not bring success. Many military researchers and participants of these events have asserted that if the Weygand plan had been well thought out and carefully organized, if the French command had shown greater decisiveness and tenacity in putting it into effect, if, furthermore, the offensive had been carried out with larger forces concentrated on narrow sectors of the front, and if the efforts of the allies had been coordinated and permeated with a united will for victory, then the meeting engagement by the allied armies through the corridor between Arras and Peronne up to 40 km wide could have substantially altered the course of the strategic defensive operation in favor of the allies. Possibly events could have happened in this manner, but the fact remains that because of a whole list of reasons, the French command after the collapse of the "Weygand counteroffensive" lost its last chance to alter the course of events in its favor. Among these reasons were the generals' loss of confidence in victory over the fascist German forces, the ensuing indecisiveness of operations in the struggle to carry out their own intentions, the clear lack of centralization in the command and control of the allied forces, and, finally, the intensification of those centrifugal forces– of which de Gaulle

*Halder, in his diary, noted on 22 May the dangerous situation that had developed near Arras, "where tank formations are fighting against large enemy forces advancing to the south." He also noted that Army Group A had called the further offensive of tank formations in the direction of Calais and intended to resume the offensive when the situation near Arras was clear (see Halder, I, 414).

†In his diary Halder noted that on 21 and 22 May the German command used two tank, one motorized, and four infantry divisions to repel the English and French attacks (see Halder, I, 415).

‡On the evening of 21 May, after the conference with Weygand, the commander of the 1st Army Group, Billotte, who had been sent to the 1st Army to assign its missions, was killed in an automobile accident. The commander of the 1st Army, who did not attend the conference and did not know about the decision that had been made, began the offensive on his own initiative. Author's note

spoke—in the allied camp. A catastrophe was looming that could no longer be prevented. The operation entered its final stage.

The defeat of the grouping of Anglo–French forces driven to the sea (the final stage of the operation). A distinctive feature of the final stage of the initial defensive operation was that, by the time of the operation, communications and cooperation between the allied armies had been completely lost. Each of the allied commanders acted at his own risk, trying to carry out the instructions of his government and not considering the common interests of the allies.

On 27 May at 2300 hours the Belgian government, having lost any hope of allied aid, signed the act of unconditional surrender to fascist Germany. And on the eve of that day the English government, its forces concentrated near Dunkirk, began to evacuate them to the British Isles. About 900 previously prepared vessels of various types took part in this operation.*

At this time the French command was still trying to organize the breakout of its armies to the south, imploring the English government to provide all its aviation to support the French forces. Not receiving allied support, the French waged unsuccessful battles on the southern face of the ring of encirclement, in fact covering the evacuation of the English forces.

During these battles the German 4th Army encircled and defeated formations of the French 9th Army near Maubeuge. On 31 May, near Lille, a major grouping of the French 1st Army was encircled and surrendered. By 5 June the northern grouping of the allied forces, which numbered about 40 divisions, had ceased to exist. The fascist German forces took prisoner nearly a million soldiers and officers from the allied armies. By this time the English command, largely because of the passive operations of the Hitlerite army, had completed the evacuation of the main forces of its expeditionary corps, having abandoned heavy guns and combat equipment on the shore.†

* *
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The main cause of the catastrophe suffered by allied forces in the initial operations lay in the "great policy" of the western powers' ruling circles. Blinded by their hatred for communism and confident of the possibility of directing fascist Germany's aggression against the USSR, they underestimated the immediate

*The English government's decision to withdraw its forces from the continent was made on 20 May. Intensive preparation of the vessels for the evacuation began at this time. Author's note.

†On the coast the English left 120,000 vehicles, about 3,000 guns, 90,000 rifles, 8,000 machine guns, 400 antitank guns, and 7,000 tons of ammunition. The number of evacuated soldiers and officers was about 338,000 (see V. A. Sekistov, *"Strannaya voyna" v Zapadnoy Yevrope i v basseyne Sredizemnogo morya (1939–1943 gg.)* [The "Phony War" in Western Europe and the Mediterranean Basin (1939–1943)] (Moscow: Voyenizdat, 1958), p. 104).

danger that German fascism spelled for Western Europe. When the invasion of France by fascist German forces became a reality, neither the French, nor even more so the Belgian, government and military command had the will to fight the aggressor or the desire to rally the entire nation for the struggle. They feared their own people more than the danger of defeat in the war.

Branching out from this main factor in the catastrophe, like from the trunk of a tree, were other circumstances that formed a whole network of interrelated causes behind the allied armies' failure in the initial operations. Prominent among these were the fundamentally defective military doctrines repeatedly mentioned here and the erroneous strategic planning based on these doctrines—particularly the gross errors made by the French command in determining the probable direction of the main enemy attack, and the outright negation of the principle of massed use of tank and mechanized forces.

This latter circumstance requires special clarification.

Official French military training did not see tanks as a new means of armed struggle whose extensive use would change the whole character of initial operations. Tanks remained a means of direct infantry support in the eyes of most of France's military officials, not to mention military officials in Holland and Belgium. These views were organizationally reinforced in the French army by the completely deliberate distribution of tanks by battalion among the large infantry formations. This deprived the French command of the opportunity to create powerful mobile strategic reserves and to use them in compact groupings to make powerful counterattacks against the enemy on threatened axes. The French command's attempts to form four tank divisions once combat operations had already started were only a belated reaction to the enemy's massed use of tanks. Furthermore, because of the difficult situation, the newly created tank formations were committed to battle separately and incompletely. Observing the principle of massed use of large mobile units, and successfully achieving overwhelming superiority in men and equipment on decisive axes, the enemy performed more effectively and efficiently. For example, the enemy was always ahead of the French forces in occupying areas and positions in the operational depth to which the French were withdrawing (the Oise River, the Northern Canal, and coastal ports); also, the enemy fortified its forces more rapidly at captured positions when it was necessary to go over to the defensive, and thus successfully repelled all counterattacks by French forces (near Sedan and Laon, on the Albert Canal, and near Abbeville).

One important circumstance that unquestionably played an important role in the defeat of the allied forces was the air supremacy of fascist German aviation.

After losing most of their aircraft in the first surprise attacks on their airfields, the French and Belgian commands found themselves totally dependent on their English ally, who was extremely sparing in the use of its aviation to

support French and Belgian forces. Not encountering serious resistance in the air, fascist German aviation successfully cleared the way for its ground forces, first of all for its tank forces; made massed attacks against fortified cities and regions, and against allied defensive lines on the Meuse, Schelde, and Oise rivers, the Albert Canal, the Northern Canal, and so on; smashed groupings of allied forces advancing to defensive positions or making counterattacks (near Sedan, Arras, and elsewhere); and disrupted French transportation operations, making it difficult to carry out operational regroupings, and so forth.

The extremely unsuccessful structure of England and France's coalition strategy stands out especially among the causes of the allied forces' defeat in the initial operations. This strategy lacked a unity of goals and a common understanding of the methods of combat operations. Each of the allies attempted to benefit from the coalition war to secure its own national interests, ignoring the interests of its partners. The allies were thus not able to create an authoritative higher command and control organ, and the bureaucratic system of joint command that developed made it extremely difficult to arrive at coordinated decisions and, what was especially important, to carry out decisions efficiently once they had been made.

Thus, the strategic defense in Poland, as well as in Western Europe, quite fully and convincingly showed that new forms and methods of conducting offensive operations also made new demands on defense. To withstand massed and deep air, airborne, and tank attacks by the enemy, defense could not remain passive and linear. It had to be deep, fluid, and highly active. Defending forces had first of all to prevent the enemy from gaining air supremacy. The seizing of air supremacy by fascist German aviation deprived enemy forces of the freedom to maneuver, since they were subjected to almost constant air attacks, and it weakened the resistance of units and formations in protecting defensive positions, since it resulted in large losses of personnel and combat equipment and finally doomed the armies to defeat.

The organization of antitank defenses was one of the main problems that the defenders had to solve in the initial operations. The defensive battles in Poland and in Western Europe showed that not one of the nations that came under attack managed to solve this problem. This was explained, first, by the defending forces' lack of any experience in conducting antitank defense and, second, by their considerable shortage of the weapons used to combat tanks, particularly ground attack aircraft, bombers, antitank artillery, engineer equipment, and so forth. The forces' lack of psychological preparation to repel massed tank attacks also had its effect on antitank defense. Frequently, even when the necessary weapons were available, a wave of tanks advancing simultaneously would terrify the soldiers and put them to flight. The psychological effect of massed tank attacks was increased because, as a rule, they were carried out in coordination with attacks by dive bombers.

Finally, events in France, just as in Poland, showed that if a higher military command is psychologically prepared to capitulate, even if it has not yet exhausted all possibilities to defeat the enemy, it thus dooms its army to defeat because it becomes capable neither of inspiring the troops to battle selflessly nor of organizing combat activity as the strategic situation requires.

Notes

1. See J. F. C. Fuller, *Vtoraya mirovaya voyna 1939-1945 gg.* [World War II 1939-1945] (Moscow: Izdatel'stvo inostrannoy literatury, 1956), p. 72.
2. See Proektor, p. 74.
3. Ibid., p. 118.
4. Ibid., p. 305.

Chapter 11. Specific Features of the Soviet Armed Forces' Strategic Defense at the Start of the Great Patriotic War

The Red Army and Navy entered the Great Patriotic War under conditions unfavorable for conducting combat operations and were forced to go over to a strategic defense on the entire front. In unleashing its war against Poland and that nation's western allies, fascist Germany achieved decisive or ultimate goals in the first operations. In the initial offensive operations on the Soviet-German Front, however, it did not accomplish the strategic missions laid out in the Barbarossa plan.

Fascist German forces were repelled in border engagements, and, although counterattacks by our forces were far from always successful, the resistance grew increasingly stronger.

Our Supreme High Command managed to save the main mass of our forces from the surprise attack by the fascist German hordes and in July achieved temporary stabilization along much of the front.

1. Soviet Defensive Operations in the Border Areas

At dawn on 22 June 1941 the fascist German army went over to the offensive in an area stretching from the Baltic Sea to the Carpathians. On the first day of the war the enemy committed 117 divisions to battle. At the start of July, when enemy assault groupings went over to the offensive from Romanian and Finnish territory, the number of enemy forces increased to 171 divisions. Over 20 fascist German divisions designated to reinforce the army groups were held in the reserve.

On the first day the border detachments and the formations of the covering armies, which were close to the border but had not yet been able to deploy on the defensive lines, made a surprise attack of unprecedented power. On the left flank of the 8th Army of the Northwestern Front the main forces of the German 4th Tank Group descended on the single 125th Rifle Division, which was fighting in a zone up to 40 km wide. The forces of the entire left wing of Army Group Center and two right-flank divisions of the 16th Army of Army Group North

attacked three rifle divisions of the 11th Army of the Northwestern Front (the 188th, 126th, and 128th), which had been able to deploy only five regiments in a 100-km sector. Using enormous superiority in men and equipment, the fascist German forces quite rapidly overcame the border fortifications and on the axes of the main attacks broke through into the depth of our defenses. The situation was extremely unfavorable in the zone between the Northwestern and Western fronts. The forward units of the enemy's 4th Tank Group reached the Doubs River 35 km to the northwest of Kaunas, while the 3rd Tank Group crossed the Neman 60 km to the south of the city.

The 4th Army of the Western Front, which was covering the Brest-Kobrin axis, fell into a difficult situation. Four rifle divisions of this army were attacked by 10 divisions from the right wing of Army Group Center supported by massed artillery fire and large air forces. Unable to withstand the attack of the superior enemy forces, two divisions (the 42nd and 6th) defending in the center of the army retreated from near Brest to the east. Independent units and groups from these formations remained in the fortress. The tank units of the 2nd Tank Group rushed into the breach that had been formed and by the end of the day, after advancing 50 to 60 km, took Kobrin. The threat arose of the encirclement from the south of the Western Front's main forces.[1]

In the zone of the Southwestern Front the enemy's main attack was made to the south of Vladimir-Volynskiy in the area between the 5th and 6th armies. It was there that the fascist German forces were able to penetrate our defenses to a depth of 20 km.

Thus, on all the main axes the weak covering units, despite the courage and heroism of the personnel, were forced to retreat under the pressure of superior enemy forces in heavy battles.

During the first day of the war our air force suffered particularly severe setbacks. The aviation units, which had not received precise instructions ahead of time on bringing their aircraft to combat readiness, were unable to take off in time and make, as had been planned, an immediate massed retaliatory attack against enemy aviation and ground forces. Because of enemy air action, around 1,200 Soviet aircraft were lost, including 738 in the Western District. Soviet pilots bravely entered dogfights against the superior forces of fascist German aviation. When the ammunition was exhausted in aerial combat, they selflessly rammed the enemy aircraft, performing this courageous feat often at the price of their lives. But the heroism of the Soviet pilots could not alter the unfavorable air situation. Despite the active resistance by Soviet aviation and the high enemy losses in aircraft, fascist German aviation, after seizing air supremacy, continued to make systematic attacks against our forces and control posts. The limited number of antiaircraft weapons that our formations had did not make possible an effective fight against the enemy's aircraft.

Organizing the rebuff of the enemy was complicated by frequent disruptions in command and control, and at times by its complete loss. The absence of permanent contact with formations and subordinate staffs deprived commanders and staffs on the operational and strategic levels of the opportunity to obtain regular information on the actual course of events and caused difficulties in controlling the development of combat operations. This often led to making decisions that did not correspond to the situation at hand.

During the first day of the war the General Staff, because of the disruption of communications between division and front levels, did not have sufficiently complete and reliable information on the developing events. As was stated by Marshal of the Soviet Union G. K. Zhukov, who at the time was chief of the General Staff, the General Staff did not grasp at that time the entire complexity of the situation. While at the staff of the Southwestern Front, the chief of the General Staff received the following information from his deputy, General N. F. Vatutin:

"By the end of 22 June, despite energetic measures, the General Staff had been unable to receive precise data from the staffs of the fronts, armies, and air force on our forces and on the enemy. Information on the depth of enemy penetration into our territory is rather contradictory. Precise information is absent on aviation and ground force losses. It is known only that the aviation of the Western Front suffered very high losses. The General Staff and the NKO* are unable to contact the commanders of the fronts, Lieutenant General F. I. Kuznetsov and General of the Army D. G. Pavlov, who, without reporting to the people's commissar, have left for somewhere in the field. The staffs of these fronts do not know where their commanders are at present.

"According to air reconnaissance data, battles are under way near our fortified lines and 15–20 km in the depth of our territory. The attempt by the staffs of the fronts to make direct contact with the troops was unsuccessful, since there were neither wire nor wireless communications with most of the armies and independent corps."[2]

On the evening of 22 June (at 2115 hours), assessing the situation, the Soviet High Command made the decision to go over to offensive operations on the main axes to defeat enemy assault groupings and to shift combat operations to enemy territory.

The forces of the Northwestern and Western fronts, † using the troops of the combined arms armies, the mechanized corps (two corps in each front), and

*[*NKO–Narodnyy komissariat oborony* 'People's Commissariat of Defense'–U.S. Ed.]

†On 22 June 1941 the Baltic Special Military District was renamed the Northwestern Front, the Western Special Military District became the Western Front, the Kiev Special Military District became the Southwestern Front, and the Odessa Military District became the 9th Army. Author's note.

front aviation, and supported by long-range aviation, were to make concentrated attacks from near Kaunas and Grodno toward the town of Suvalki. They were to encircle and destroy the Suvalki enemy grouping and, by the end of 24 June, capture the region around Suvalki.

The forces of the Southwestern Front received orders to use the forces of two combined arms armies—no fewer than five mechanized corps and all of front aviation with the support of long-range aviation—to attack Lublin on converging axes, to encircle and destroy the enemy grouping advancing on the front of Vladimir-Volynskiy and Krystynopol, and, by the end of 24 June, to take the Lublin region.

The armies of the Northern and Southern fronts* were given defensive missions to cover the state border in their areas and not allow an enemy invasion of our territory.

The Soviet High Command, making the decision on the evening of 22 June on offensive operations, did not have an opportunity to consider the difficult situation that the forces of the border military districts (or fronts) were in by that time. Many of the formations in the operation, and above all the mechanized corps, were a great distance from the starting areas for the offensive and were unable to quickly concentrate on the designated lines and make massed attacks against the enemy at the same time. Most of the mechanized corps were also not up to full strength in personnel and had a very limited quantity of combat equipment.† The situation was further aggravated because the aviation, which had suffered heavy losses on the first day of the war, and the few air defense units could not securely cover their troops against attacks by enemy bombers. Some formations that had advanced to the deployment lines for the offensive were subjected to massed enemy air attacks and suffered major losses even before

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*Officially, the Leningrad Military District was renamed the Northern Front on 24 June 1941. On the same day, by decision of High Command Headquarters, the Southern Front was formed. Author's note.

†By 22 June 1941, in the western border military districts, there were around 20 mechanized corps, including 6 (the 6th, 11th, 13th, 14th, 17th, and 20th) in the Western and 8 (the 4th, 8th, 9th, 15th, 16th, 19th, 22nd, and 24th) in the Kiev District. Most of them had begun organization only in March 1941. By the start of the war none of these corps was up to full strength in men or equipment. The level of equipment (including obsolete tanks) averaged 53 percent. Because of the small number of tanks, several corps (the 13th, 17th, 20th, and 24th) could not be called mechanized formations (see *Journal of Military History*, 1964, No. 3, pp. 33-34).

Marshal of the Soviet Union K. K. Rokossovskiy, who commanded the 9th Mechanized Corps at the start of the war, wrote: "The misfortune was that the corps was mechanized in name only. With bitterness I looked at our old T-26, BT-5, and few BT-7 tanks, understanding that in long combat operations they would not hold out. And this is not to mention that we did not have more than one-third the regulation strength even of these tanks. And the motorized infantry of both tank divisions! It had none of the regulation vehicles, and as far as motorization, there were neither carts nor horses" (K. K. Rokossovskiy, *Soldatskiy dolg* [A Soldier's Duty] (Moscow: Voyenizdat, 1968), p. 13).

entering battle.* The artillery of the mechanized corps and of the combined arms formations, which experienced an acute lack of traction units, was unable to assemble promptly on the selected axes. Because of the disruption of the work of the logistics units and the shortage of transport equipment, the tank formations were often left without fuel and ammunition.

The combined arms formations, which in cooperation with the mechanized corps were to participate in the counteroffensive, as a rule entered combat operations separately. In moving up from the rear, they were late in reaching the designated deployment lines and under enemy pressure were forced to hurriedly go over to the defensive on terrain unsuited for this purpose.

Ultimately, all of this led to a situation where the offensive operations of the Soviet forces deployed in the zone of the Northwestern and Western fronts on 23 to 25 June developed into inadequately coordinated counterattacks by the mechanized formations.

Despite the selfless actions of the troops, the operational-strategic results of the counterattacks of the Northwestern and Western fronts were insignificant, while the losses suffered were great.

More effective against the enemy were the counterattacks by the forces of the Southwestern Front that began on 24 June. To stop the breakthrough of the 1st Tank Group on the boundary between the 5th and 6th armies, the commander of the front, General M. P. Kirponos, brought in the 8th, 9th, 15th, 19th, and 22nd mechanized corps. In truth, by the time the directives from Headquarters were received, these corps were scattered across the entire front. Many of them had to march 100 to 400 km to reach the designated deployment lines. For this reason, the corps were committed to battle sequentially and there was no powerful simultaneous counterattack. Nevertheless, from 26 June, near Lutsk, Dubno, and Brody, the largest tank engagement in the initial period of the war developed across a broad front. Intense battles of varying success lasted until 29 June. And although the mechanized corps were unable to carry out the mission of encircling and defeating the main forces of the 1st Tank Group, they held up its advance for an entire week and inflicted considerable casualties. Most important, the enemy's intention to encircle the main forces of the Southwestern Front in the Lvov salient and carry out a rapid breakthrough to Kiev was thwarted.

*Gen I. V. Boldin, showing the complexity of preparations for the attack planned by the Western Front against the enemy on the Grodno axis, wrote: "To complete the calamities, at dawn enemy bombers attacked the 36th Cavalry Division on the march and caused serious damage. Thus there could not be any question of a counterattack. . . ." (I. V. Boldin, *Stranitsy zhizni* [Pages of a Life] (Moscow: Voyenizdat, 1961), p. 96).

During preparations for the counterattack by the Northwestern Front the formations of the 12th Mechanized Corps, spread over a 60-km front, came under a massed enemy air attack while advancing to the line of deployment near Shyaulyay and were unable to take up the starting position for the offensive in good time (see *Journal of Military History*, 1964, No. 3, p. 37).

Here is how this engagement was viewed by the former commander of the German 3rd Tank Group, H. Hoth: "It was most difficult of all for Army Group South. The enemy forces on the defensive in front of the formations of the northern wing were thrown back from the border, but they quickly recovered from the unexpected attack and stopped the advance of the German forces by counterattacking with their reserves and with the tank units from the interior. The operational breakthrough of the 1st Tank Group, which had been assigned to the 6th Army, was not achieved until 28 June. The powerful enemy counterattacks made from the region to the south of the Pripet Marshes against the forces advancing along the Lutsk—Rovno—Zhitomir highway were a major obstacle on the path of the advance of the German units. These counterattacks caused major forces of the 1st Tank Group to alter the direction of their advance and, instead of advancing on Kiev, to turn north and engage in battles of local importance."[3]

Thus, the counterattacks of the Soviet forces during the first days of the war played a noticeable role in thwarting the enemy's initial intentions. However, these counterattacks did not substantially alter the operational-strategic situation.

Somewhat later, the combat conditions on the northwestern and western axes became much worse.

The forces of the Northwestern Front, in retreating from the border, were unable to promptly organize a stable defense along the right bank of the Western Dvina. At the start of July the undermanned and poorly equipped formations of the 27th Army that had been brought up to cover the axis of Daugavpils and Pskov were pushed back under attacks by the 4th Tank Group and allowed the enemy to seize a bridgehead on the right bank of the Western Dvina near Daugavpils. At this time the 8th Army was engaged in stubborn battles on the approaches to Riga. The remaining formations of the front were conducting delaying actions on the Polotsk and Vitebsk axes.

The forces of the Western Front were in an even more difficult situation. There, at the end of June, one of the heaviest battles of the initial period of the war developed. From the north and south, formations of the enemy's 2nd and 3rd tank groups succeeded in outflanking forces of the Western Front that had been fighting on the Belostok salient and, on 28 June, linked up near Minsk. The paths of withdrawal for the units of the 3rd and 10th armies were cut off. In addition to them, three divisions of the 13th Army and two divisions assigned to the front were encircled. A total of 11 comparatively combat-capable divisions and the remainder of several other formations of the Western Front were encircled. A difficult mission fell to the encircled forces: through their operations they were to pin down as many fascist German troops as possible, thus gaining the time needed by the High Command to bring up reserves from the country's interior. Until 8 July the Hitlerite command was forced to keep the main forces of the field armies of Army Group Center (up to 30 divisions) near

Minsk and to the west of it. It was then much easier for our High Command to restore the strategic front on the western axis.

The forces that had been encircled were fighting against the enemy in an exceptionally difficult situation. Cut off from the rear supply bases, they had no opportunity to replenish reserves of food, fuel, and ammunition. The encircled formations were under constant pressure from enemy aviation and attacks by ground forces from different directions. The enemy was also superior to these formations in force. After the encircled grouping had been cut up into parts, combat operations continued in centers of resistance. Many battalions and regiments subsequently fought their way out to join up with the main forces, many of the soldiers and commanders began partisan operations in the enemy rear, and many heroic sons of our Motherland died brave deaths or were taken prisoner in these heavy battles.

At the end of June the situation became much worse in the operations zone of the Southwestern Front. After stubborn battles near Lutsk, Rovno, and Brody, the enemy, after regrouping the forces in Army Group South and committing fresh forces to battle, broke the resistance of the front forces on the boundary between the 5th and 6th armies and undertook a major attack on the Zhitomir axis. Almost simultaneously, on 1 July, fascist German and Romanian forces went over to the offensive from Romanian territory. Making their main attack against the right wing of the Southern Front, on 3 July they captured a bridgehead on the left bank of the Prut River between Lipkany and Iasi. The threat arose that the Southern Front would be cut off and that the Southwestern Front would be encircled on both flanks.

At the end of June combat operations started in the Far North. On 29 June the German "Norway" Army began an offensive on the Murmansk axis. On 30 June Finnish forces attacked our positions on the Ukhta axis, and, on 1 July, fascist German and Finnish forces struck from Kuolayarvi toward Kandalaksha.

During the first days of the war the situation in the naval theaters of operations also developed unfavorably for our fleet. By the start of the war the Soviet Navy had a higher level of combat readiness than the other services of the armed forces. On the first day of the war the Black Sea Fleet successfully repelled a massed air attack by fascist German aviation against its main base, Sevastopol, although in subsequent days it feared a repetition of the attacks. Hitlerite aviation limited itself just to laying mines at the entrance to the base. But the Baltic Fleet was in a difficult situation. The main threat to it came from the land. On the first day of the war the advance units of the fascist German forces, moving along the coast, reached the approaches to the forward base of the Baltic Fleet, Libava (Liyepaya). Soon after that, another base, Riga, was threatened by capture from land, and then the main naval base of the Baltic Fleet, Tallinn. Although the approaches to these bases from land had not been prepared ahead of time

for defense, the men of the army and navy stubbornly defended them but were unable to hold them for long.

Thus, in the border regions the Red Army, and on the maritime boundaries the Red Navy, put up heroic resistance to the enemy. However, because of the surprise of the first attack and the great superiority of the fascist German army in men and equipment, our troops were unable to hold the Germans in the border area and stop the deep attacks by their tank units. The formations of our army and navy fought against the enemy under exceptionally difficult conditions, when often there was not enough fuel and ammunition and interruptions in command and control were felt. Hundreds of thousands of servicemen fought the enemy literally to the last drop of blood. History has already recorded the names of many thousands of them.

It is notable that during the first tragic days of the war not only individual soldiers and commanders, but also entire units and formations, when encircled or falling under the attack of the superior forces on the front, met the enemy steadfastly, courageously, and skillfully.

For 11 days the 13th Border Post of Lieutenant A.V. Lopatin of the 90th Vladimir-Volynskiy Border Detachment defended a strongpoint heroically. And only when all its defenders had perished did the enemy occupy the strongpoint.

On the Baltic coast units of the 67th Division under General N. A. Dedayev and units of the Libava Naval Base under the command of Captain 1st Rank M. S. Klevanskiy thwarted the Hitlerites' attempts to take Libava (Liyepaya) on the march.

The small garrison at the Brest Fortress, after being encircled, spared no forces and defended itself courageously. Through its heroic resistance it tied down large enemy forces for a month.

In the center of the 6th Army's zone of operations, near Rava-Russkaya, the 41st Rifle Division, under the command of General G. N. Mikushev, met the enemy attack in an organized manner from the first hours of the war.

The mass heroism of Soviet soldiers in the fight against the fascist invaders was a striking manifestation of the war's genuinely popular character. However, even now among western historians there are those who try to discredit the heroic actions of our army and to represent our soldiers in a false light. One of the falsifiers of history, the West German sociologist Sebastian Haffner, in slandering the Soviet people and their Armed Forces, has alleged and tried to prove that during the first months of the war there was "low morale" among Soviet troops and that "many Russian officers and soldiers did not want to fight." These false assertions are completely repudiated by the war's initial period. They are also

contradicted by the statements of many high-ranking generals in the fascist German army who, through their own experience, felt the force of resistance of the Soviet troops.

Thus, the Hitlerite general Butlar said that "because of the stubborn resistance of the Russians even during the first days of combat, the German forces suffered heavy losses in men and equipment that were much higher than the losses they experienced in the campaigns in Poland and the west. It was completely obvious," continued Butlar, "that the method of conducting combat operations and the morale of the enemy, like the geographic conditions of the given country, were quite different from those encountered by the Germans in the previous blitzkriegs that had led to the successes that stunned the entire world."[4]

The diary of Chief of the German General Staff Halder is rich in such entries:

26 June 1941 "... The Russians are not thinking of retreat, but, on the contrary, are throwing everything at their disposal in the path of the spearheading German forces."

27 June 1941 "... Events are developing not at all in the manner foreseen on the higher staffs...."

28 June 1941 "In the Belostok forest to the southeast of the city stubborn battles are under way, which, against expectations, are tying down the entire center and part of the right wing of the 4th Army.... In all sectors of the front the small number of prisoners is characteristic...."

29 June 1941 "*Information from the front* confirms that the Russians are fighting everywhere to the last man.... One is struck that in capturing artillery batteries and so forth, only a few are taken prisoner. Part of the Russians fight until they are killed, while others... try to break out of the encirclement disguised as peasants."[5]

The German general Ott at that time reported to the General Staff that "the stubborn resistance of the Russians has forced us to conduct combat according to all the rules of our field manuals. In Poland and the west, we could permit ourselves certain liberties and deviations from the principles of the regulations; now that is impossible."[6]

However, no matter how great the heroism of the Soviet people, this could not fundamentally alter the extremely unfavorable operational-strategic situation on the front. Statewide measures were required to mobilize all the forces to repel the enemy.

2. The Mobilization of All the Nation's Forces to Repel the Enemy

The Communist Party Central Committee was able to quickly analyze the situation that developed because of the Red Army's severe setbacks at the start of the war. It worked out a comprehensive program to mobilize the country's forces to repel the enemy and carried out a whole set of immediate political, economic, and military measures to put the program into effect (see table 17). This program was set forth in a 29 June directive from the USSR SNK and the AUCP(b) Central Committee to the party and soviet organizations along the front.

V. I. Lenin taught our party that the socialist nation is strong when the masses know everything, can judge everything, and do everything consciously.[7] The AUCP(b), in raising the people to a noble struggle against the invaders, did not conceal from them the enormous danger that hung over the Motherland. "The USSR SNK and the AUCP(b) Central Committee announce," the 29 June directive stated, "that in the war imposed on us by fascist Germany the question of the life and death of the Soviet nation is being decided, and whether the peoples of the Soviet Union will be free or enslaved."[8] The party cautioned the Soviet people against underestimating the enemy: "The enemy is strong. It would be folly to underestimate its forces. The war requires that all forces, our iron will, and our courageous resourcefulness be put to the test.... We must not console ourselves with ideas of easy successes."[9] At the same time, the party demanded from all communists great vigilance and the fiercest struggle against an overestimation of the enemy's strength and ability, which could give rise to confusion and panic among the population.

From the first days of the war the AUCP(b) began enormous mass political work in the country, explaining the just character of the Great Patriotic War against the foreign enslavers. The party instilled in the people a firm conviction that, despite the temporary successes of the fascist forces, an inevitable defeat awaited the invaders.

To carry out mass political work, the Central Committee of our party mobilized thousands of party agitators and propagandists, the press, radio, literature, and art. On 24 June, by decree of the AUCP(b) Central Committee and USSR SNK, the Soviet Information Bureau was created. Its mission was to keep the people well informed about the situation on the fronts and about the measures by the party and the government to organize efforts to repel the enemy. On the same day, the Red Army's Main Directorate of Political Propaganda sent to the fronts and districts a directive that defined the content and principal missions of political agitation and propaganda among the troops. The introduction of the institution of military commissars and the reorganization of the Armed Forces' political organs were of great importance in strengthening party-political work in the army and navy.

To mobilize all the country's forces to repel the fascist aggression and achieve victory over the enemy, the AUCP(b) Central Committee, the Presidium of the USSR Supreme Soviet, and the USSR SNK felt it necessary to concentrate all superior executive power in a single organ that would be able to unite the efforts of the front and the rear, make decisions quickly, and carry them out efficiently. Such an organ was the GKO,* which was formed on 30 June under the leadership of J. V. Stalin.

Mobilizing the party and people to repel the enemy, the AUCP(b) Central Committee and the USSR SNK focused their attention primarily on strengthening the Soviet Armed Forces. On the first day of the war the Presidium of the USSR Supreme Soviet issued an edict on the mobilization of reservists into the army and navy in 14 military districts. At the same time, an edict was issued on establishing martial law in the western border republics and in some regions of the Russian Republic, and a regulation was approved on the work of military tribunals in combat areas and on territory declared under martial law.

On the second day of the war, 23 June, the Headquarters of the High Command was created under the chairmanship of People's Commissar of Defense Marshal of the Soviet Union S. K. Timoshenko to direct the military operations of the Armed Forces. On 10 July, to improve the strategic control of the troops, a GKO decree formed high commands for the Northwestern, Western, and Southwestern axes, while the Headquarters of the High Command was renamed the Headquarters of the Supreme Command. The membership of Headquarters included J. V. Stalin (chairman), V. M. Molotov, S. K. Timoshenko, S. M. Budennyy, K. Ye. Voroshilov, B. M. Shaposhnikov, and G. K. Zhukov.

During July and August, in accord with the requirements of the war, a major reorganization was carried out in the central apparatus of the NKO, and above all in the General Staff. The General Staff was turned into the working organ of Headquarters for operational control for military operations, and the NKO became the working organ of the GKO for mobilization of resources and preparation of reserves for the Armed Forces. On 19 July J. V. Stalin was appointed People's Commissar of Defense and, on 8 August, the Supreme Commander. Correspondingly, the Headquarters of the Supreme Command was renamed the Headquarters of the Supreme High Command.

Strengthening the leadership of the Armed Forces, the AUCP(b) Central Committee, from the start of the war, sent up to one-third of the leading party and state workers into the army and navy for command and political work. To strengthen party influence in units and formations, the AUCP(b) Central Committee approved a decision to mobilize communists and Young Communist League members for the front. During the first year of the war the party sent

*[*GKO – Gosudarstvennyy komitet oborony* "State Defense Committee" – U.S. Ed.]

no fewer than one million communists and about two million Young Communist League members into the Armed Forces.[10]

An important part of the party's military organizational work was the preparation of combat reserves. Under the leadership of the central and local party organs, a large army of volunteers from the People's Home Guard was created and sent to the front.

Organizing to repel the enemy, the AUCP(b) Central Committee and the USSR SNK devoted serious attention to national air defense. On 2 July the SNK approved the resolution "On Universal Compulsory Training of the Population for Air Defense."

The Communist Party was the organizer of the partisan movement. Tens of thousands of Soviet people rose to the armed struggle in the enemy rear. The task of developing partisan operations in the rear of the fascist German forces was put forth in the 29 June directive. On 18 July the Politburo of the AUCP(b) Central Committee approved the special decree "On Organizing the Struggle in the Rear of the German Forces."

Raising the Soviet people to fight the enemy, the party's Central Committee and the USSR SNK worked out an extensive program to reorganize the national economy to meet the needs of the front. In an extremely brief period workers in the rear had to supply the Armed Forces with sufficient quantities of new types of weapons and combat equipment, and above all with aircraft and tanks. On the second day of the war a previously prepared mobilization plan for ammunition production was put into effect. On 30 June, instead of the plan already in use for the development of the national economy during the third quarter of 1941, a new plan was approved. It provided for a 26 percent increase in the production of military equipment and weapons. This was the first economic plan that defined practical measures to reorganize the economy on a war footing.

On 4 July the GKO instructed a commission under the leadership of USSR State Planning Commission Chairman N. A. Voznesenskiy to work out a long-range plan for development of the military economy. By 16 August 1941 the GKO had already approved the military economic plan submitted by the commission for the fourth quarter of 1941 and for 1942 for the Volga, Urai, Western Siberia, Kazakhstan, and Central Asia regions.

During the first days of the war the Communist Party made a start on reorganizing the state apparatus in accord with wartime conditions. New people's commissariats were created that took control of the most important military production. The rights of the people's commissars were broadened. Under the USSR SNK, the Council for the Allocation of Manpower was formed, and special working conditions were introduced at factories and other establishments.

Table 17. The Principal Events and Measures in the Initial Period of the Great Patriotic War.

Military measures	Political measures	Economic measures
1. **Implementation of plan to cover state border and start of combat operations by Soviet Armed Forces along entire strategic front:** —Soviet command's attempts in first days of war to seize strategic initiative from enemy by organizing offensives on a number of axes; —first tank meeting engagements on Shyaulyay axis in region of Brody, Rovno, and Lutsk; —going over of Soviet Armed Forces to active strategic defense along entire Soviet-German Front (carrying out of first strategic defensive operations on major axes, attacks by Soviet aviation on airfields and enemy groupings, attacks by naval forces of Northern, Baltic and Black Sea fleets on enemy convoys and separate naval bases); —creation of defensive groupings, moving up of strategic reserves to most dangerous axes, construction of rear defensive lines on major strategic axes, and covering of naval bases. 2. **Creation and reorganization of strategic control organs and of troop organizational structure:** —creation of Supreme High Command, high commands of strategic axes, commands of certain branches of arms (air force, artillery); —improvement of organizational structure of General Staff and central apparatus of NKO; —change in organizational structure of ground forces and aviation.	1. **Formulation of military and political goals of Great Patriotic War and political mobilization of Soviet people for armed resistance against invaders:** —radio announcement by Soviet government on 22 June 1941 of treacherous attack by fascist Germany on Soviet Union; —directive of USSR SNK and AUCP(b) Central Committee of 29 June 1941 on mobilization of all forces to repel fascist German invaders. Creation of GKO and radio broadcast by GKO chairman on 3 July 1941; —decree of AUCP(b) Central Committee "On Organizing the Struggle in the Rear of the German Forces." 2. **Strengthening of mass political and ideological work in army and among population:** —decree of AUCP(b) Central Committee on mobilization of communists into military to strengthen party-political work among troops, improve organization, discipline, morale, and fighting spirit of army and navy; —introduction of institution of military commissars in army and navy; —creation of Soviet Information Bureau. 3. **Formation of anti-Hitlerite coalition:** —talks between Soviet ambassadors and representatives of British and U.S. governments on joint fight against fascist Germany; —publication of announcements of U.S. and English governments on support for Soviet Union in war against	1. **Reorganization of Soviet economy to meet war needs:** —mobilization of production capacity of industry, of agricultural resources, and also of manpower to meet military production and needs of army and navy; —approval of national mobilization plan for 3rd quarter of 1941 and creation of commission to work out military economic plan for 4th quarter of 1941 and for 1942. 2. **Transfer of materiel and population east from threatened regions:** —decree of AUCP(b) Central Committee on evacuation of population, industrial enterprises, and valuable materiel from front zone; —creation of Evacuation Council under USSR SNK, —decree of USSR SNK "On Security of Enterprises and Institutions and the Creation of Paramilitary Battalions." 3. **Start of reorganization of state apparatus to mobilize all the nation's resources for war needs:** —creation of new people's commissariats for military production; —creation of Manpower Allocation Council under USSR SNK; —broadening of rights of USSR people's commissars under wartime conditions.

3. Completion of troop mobilizations: —declaration of open mobilization for 14 military districts; —completion of mobilization of units and formations under mobilization plans (by July 1941) and start of organization of 96 new formations in accord with decision of GKO; —creation of new strategic reserves and formation of people's militia in Leningrad, Moscow, and other cities.	fascist Germany; —talks between People's Commissar of Foreign Affairs and British ambassador on need to open a second front in Europe; —exchange of military missions between USSR and Great Britain. Sending of military mission to U.S.; —signing of agreements between USSR and Great Britain on joint operations in war against Germany; —signing of agreement by Soviet and Czechoslovak governments on joint struggle against Germany and on the creation of Czechoslovak troop formations on USSR territory. Conclusion of similar agreement with Polish government; —exchange of messages between USSR and British heads of government on military operations against fascist Germany and on opening of second front in Europe and the north.	

The evacuation of people and production facilities from threatened regions and the rapid reopening of evacuated enterprises in the country's eastern regions were primary national economic tasks. By a decision of the AUCP(b) Central Committee, the Evacuation Council was set up under the chairmanship of N. M. Shvernik. A. N. Kosygin and M. G. Pervukhin became his deputies. Under the leadership of the Evacuation Council many thousands of factories, state farms, and collective farms were moved from the threatened regions to the east in a brief period.

The USSR SNK decree approved on 26 June, "On the Security of Factories and Other Establishments and on the Creation of Paramilitary Battalions," was of great importance in strengthening the country's defense capability.

The Communist Party clearly formulated its foreign policy program. It set for the Soviet people the mission not only of liberating the Soviet Motherland from the fascist German occupiers, but also of helping the nations of Europe to escape from the fascist yoke. This program was recognized and warmly supported by the nations of the entire world. They saw in the Soviet nation a dependable ally in the struggle for their national freedom and independence.

The task of creating an antifascist coalition was solved successfully. The firm demands of the peoples of the U.S. and England to join forces with the USSR in the common struggle against fascism contributed to this. The English and U.S. governments were forced to draw closer to the Soviet Union after taking into account the difficult situation in which they found themselves after the defeat of France and the capture of almost all of Europe by fascist Germany. On 12 July in Moscow an agreement was signed on joint operations by the USSR and Great Britain in the war against Hitlerite Germany. The U.S., which at the time was not in the war, promised to provide economic aid to the Soviet Union. At the same time, there was an exchange of military missions betwen the USSR and England. Somewhat later the Soviet government carried out such major foreign policy actions as final agreements with the Czechoslovak and Polish governments on a joint struggle against Germany and on the creation of Czechoslovak and Polish military formations on USSR territory. Also dating to this time was the start of talks with the western allies on opening a second front.

Thus, even during the first days and weeks of the war, the Communist Party, after working out a comprehensive program to mobilize all the forces to repel the enemy, laid a firm foundation to overcome the temporary difficulties of the initial period of the war, without for a moment losing faith in the ultimate victory over Hitlerite Germany.

3. The Commitment of the Strategic Reserves and the Temporary Stabilization of the Defense

At the end of June the High Command of the Soviet Armed Forces realized that the war plan that had been drawn up before the war and that it was trying to put into effect during the first days of the war did not meet the actual situation. The forces of the western border military districts that had been formed into fronts were unable to defeat the invading enemy or stop it at intermediate positions. Under such conditions the Soviet High Command was forced to fundamentally reshape its war plan.

The new plan put forward the mission of undermining the enemy's offensive capabilities by an active strategic defense along the entire front; of gaining time to build up strategic reserves; and, after altering the balance of forces during combat operations, of creating the conditions for the Soviet Army to go over to a decisive strategic counteroffensive. Initially the possibility of such a counteroffensive was linked to committing to battle the forces of the second strategic echelon deployed along the Dnepr.

On 25 June High Command Headquarters issued instructions to the General Staff on organizing a four-army group of High Command Reserve armies (the 19th, 20th, 21st, and 22nd) out of formations that were completing their mobilization. This group was headed by Marshal of the Soviet Union S. M. Budennyy. It had until the end of 28 June to occupy and firmly defend the line of Kraslava, Disna, the Polotsk Fortified Region, Vitebsk, Orsha, and the Dnepr to Loyev. The armies in this group were to prevent the enemy from breaking through toward Moscow, using powerful counterattacks to destroy it. The commander of the army group near Smolensk, Yartsevo, and Dukhovshchina was given the High Command Reserve's 16th Army, which previously, under the deployment plan, was to have been part of the Southwestern Front. On the same day, 28 June, High Command Headquarters issued orders for the forces of the 24th and 28th armies—13 rifle, 6 tank, and 3 motorized divisions—to advance to the line of Nelidovo; Belyy; the Dnepr as far as Usvyatye; Yelnya; the Desna as far as Zhukovka; and Lopush with the mission of preparing, occupying, and firmly defending this line. Headquarters gave particular attention to covering the Smolensk and Vyazma axes.

The commander of the Northwestern Front was ordered to concentrate front reserves near Pskov, Ostrov, Novorzhev, and Porkhov, to prepare defenses in the Pskov and Ostrov fortified areas, and to firmly seal off the access to Leningrad.

On the southwestern axis, because of the threat that the enemy would outflank the forces of the Southern Front from the north, and to reduce the length of the front and create a better grouping of the Southern and Southwestern fronts,

High Command Headquarters ordered that the forces of these fronts be pulled back by 9 July to the line of the old fortified areas, where a strong defense was to be organized.

These decisions by Headquarters were the first measures to restore the broken strategic defensive front. They were carried out while the enemy continued to advance.

In the operations zone of the Northwestern Front the forces of the enemy's 4th Tank Group captured Ostrov on 6 July and Pskov on 9 July. The 1st Mechanized Corps and the 22nd and 41st rifle corps, which Headquarters had moved up on this axis, had not been able to occupy the Pskov and Ostrov fortified regions and were forced to engage the enemy in heavy battles on the approach to these areas. On 9 July Headquarters combined these corps into a new 11th Army, whose command was shifted here from the left wing of the Northwestern Front. The army was given the mission of firmly covering the Leningrad axis. The line of the Velikaya River to Idritsa was occupied by the 27th Army, which retreated there from the Western Dvina. At this time, on instructions from Headquarters, the Luga Operations Group, with help from the population of Leningrad, hurriedly created a defensive line on the Luga River that covered the distant approaches to Leningrad. Extensive defensive works were simultaneously organized on the immediate approaches to the city.

The enemy breakthrough to Pskov put the 8th Army in a difficult situation. Cut off from the main forces of the front, it was forced to retreat to the north during heavy battles. By 10 July it had been able to reinforce itself on the line of Pyarnu and Tartu. Here for a long time it held up the advance of the German 18th Army.

A very serious situation developed on the western axis during the first days of July. The command of Army Group Center, after leaving its infantry formations to finish the fighting against the encircled Soviet forces to the west of Minsk, combined the 2nd and 3rd tank groups into the 4th Tank Army and rushed it in to capture the line of the Dnepr.

At this time Soviet High Command Headquarters sent a group of reserve armies to the Western Front to unite the efforts of its forces fighting on the western axis. Marshal of the Soviet Union S. K. Timoshenko was appointed the commander of the front. The front was given the mission to firmly cover the Smolensk axis by a stubborn defense of the line of the Western Dvina and Dnepr to Loyev. The 16th Army was moved up to reinforce the front near Smolensk.

In the rear defensive area behind the Northwestern and Western fronts a new front of reserve armies was deployed. In addition to the previously deployed 24th and 28th armies, this front consisted of the newly formed 29th and 30th

armies. The forces of the front were to hold the line of Staraya Russa, Belyy, Istomino, Ostashkov, Yelnya, and Bryansk. The 31st and 32nd armies were in the front's reserve, and the divisions of these armies were concentrated near Torzhok, Rzhev, Volokolamsk, Kalinin, Ruza, Mozhaysk, Maloyaroslavets, Vysokinichi, and Naro-Fominsk.

By the time the formations of the German 4th Tank Army had reached the Western Dvina and Dnepr, the forces of the Red Army's second strategic echelon had not yet been able to fully take up the defensive line. However, on the western axis the enemy was soundly repelled.

The 22nd, 20th, and 21st armies, after inflicting serious losses on the enemy, held up the advance of the 3rd Tank Group with their counterattacks near Desna, Vitebsk, and to the north and northwest of Orsha and dampened the offensive spirit of the fascist German forces to a great degree.

Our aviation played an active role in repelling enemy tank attacks. Our bombers, making use of air reconnaissance data, first attacked the lead units of the tank and motorized columns, and then bombed and machine-gunned the combat equipment and troops that had accumulated on the roads. Many attacks were made against the fascist forces on the crossings over the Western Dvina, Drut, and Berezina rivers. The 3rd Tank Group's attempts to capture a bridgehead from a march formation on the eastern bank of the Dnepr and to continue the drive on the Smolensk axis were not successful. By the end of 9 July the offensive of the German 4th Tank Army had been halted along the entire defensive front from Disna to Zhlobin.

At the start of July our forces on the Southwestern Front were fighting the enemy under conditions no less complex than those on the western axis. After regrouping its forces after intense week-long battles near Lutsk, Rovno, and Brody, the German 1st Tank Group used two mechanized corps to attack the weakly secured boundary area between the 5th and 6th armies and broke through to Ostrog. On 8 July fascist German mobile formations captured Berdichev, and on 9 July entered Zhitomir. Independent tank units succeeded in reaching the approaches to Kiev. At this time the German 11th Army and the Romanian forces, which on 3 July had gone over the offensive from bridgeheads on the left bank of the Prut, advanced up to 60 km on a northeastern axis and approached Mogilev-Posolskiy. The threat arose that not only would the capital of the Ukraine, Kiev, be captured by the enemy, but also that the main forces of the Southwestern Front would be encircled. In the existing situation the command of the Southwestern Front ordered the commanders of the 6th, 26th, and 12th armies to accelerate the withdrawal of their forces to the line indicated by a Headquarters directive of 30 June—through the fortified areas of Korosten, Novograd-Volynskiy, Shepetovka, Starokonstantinov, Proskurov, and Kamenets-Podolskiy. The forces of the right wing of the Southern Front were

also to withdraw to the same line to the south of Kamenets-Podolskiy. According to the directive, the withdrawal of the forces was to be completed by 9 July.

To support the accelerated withdrawal of the main forces of the Southwestern Front to the line of the old fortified areas, the troops of the 5th and 6th armies made counterattacks against the flanks of the 1st Tank Group. Because of these counterattacks, the command of Army Group South was forced to temporarily halt the offensive on the Kiev axis. Meanwhile, the forces of the 6th, 26th, and 12th armies retreated to the line of Berdichev, Khmelnik, and Letichev. The next attempt by the fascist German command to encircle the main forces of the Southwestern Front collapsed. About this stage of military operations on the southwestern axis, the German general Butlar wrote: "After conducting heavy, bloody battles, the forces of Army Group South could make only frontal attacks on the enemy and force it to the east. The German motorized formations were not once able to break clear of or outflank the enemy, let alone encircle any major Russian forces."[11]

Although in mid-July, by the time enemy tank forces reached the line of Lake Chud, Vitebsk, Orsha, and the Dnepr, it had not been possible to complete the creation of a firm and continuous strategic defensive front, the major organizational measures taken by Soviet High Command Headquarters had important consequences. The forces of the first strategic echelon retreating from the border in heavy battles pulled back to the lines on which the forces of the second strategic echelon were already deploying. The retreating units merged with the second echelon or were pulled back into the High Command Reserve.

The navy increased operations against the enemy. It took a direct part in defending such important naval bases as Tallinn, the Munsund Islands, Hanko, Odessa, and Sevastopol. The stubborn defense of these bases diverted considerable enemy forces and played an important role in thwarting the fascist German forces' blitzkrieg advance on the maritime axes. The navy also started operations against enemy coastal installations and tried to distrupt enemy sea communications. In truth, these operations were limited, but caused a good deal of damage to the enemy.

At the start of the war the Black Sea Fleet used its aviation to make several attacks against Ploesti, Constanta, and Sulina, attempting to destroy the Romanian oil fields and tank farms. Some 82 bombers participated in the air attacks on Constanta, and 25 on Sulina.

On 26 June a detachment of light naval forces from the Black Sea Fleet made a successful raid on Constanta. The fire in the tank farms caused by the shelling from the ships destroyed large oil reserves. The explosion of a train loaded with ammunition at the Constanta station damaged the station and the tracks.

Air attacks against the Romanian oil fields, tank farms, and oil pipelines across the Danube to Constanta continued in July and August. Attacks on Ploesti were made systematically up to 18 August. They refuted the fascist propaganda about the annihilation of Soviet aviation.

At the start of July the fascist German command felt that the main forces of the Red Army had been defeated and the war was won. On 3 July Halder wrote in his diary: "... It would not be an exaggeration if I said that the campaign against Russia was won in 14 days."[12] On 4 July he made the following conclusion: "On the whole, it must be considered that the enemy no longer has sufficient forces for a serious defense of its defensive line running ... along the Western Dvina and Dnepr rivers and then to the south."[13] He based this conclusion on the following calculations: "Of the 164 enemy rifle divisions identified by us, 89 have been totally or largely destroyed. There are 46 combat-capable Russian rifle divisions remaining on the front. Eighteen divisions are held down in other sectors (14 against Finland, 4 in the Caucasus). Eleven divisions are apparently still in reserve in the rear.

"Of the 29 *tank divisions* identified by us, 20 have been totally or largely destroyed. Nine divisions are still completely combat-capable.

"With such forces," concluded Halder, "the enemy is no longer able to form a continuous front, even on the most important axes."[14]

Such an assessment of the situation on the Soviet-German Front was profoundly mistaken. Intoxicated by the Hitlerite army's initial successes, Halder at that time did not understand the main thing—that the war was just starting, not ending. He was also using figures that were far from valid.

By 10 July there were 201 divisions under the Soviet High Command.[15] In truth, the number of personnel in the German and Soviet divisions differed. Most of the German divisions were up to full strength. They had 15,000 to 16,000 men in each, while our most fully manned divisions each numbered 10,000 to 12,000 men.[16] There were 90 such divisions; the remainder were not up to full strength (50 percent and more).[17] On the whole, the enemy's forces outnumbered our forces by a factor of approximately 1.5. The enemy also had considerable advantages in equipment. We still had few of the new types of aircraft and tanks whose performance was as good as that of German equipment.

By mid-July, when the strategic reserves entered battle, the fascist German forces had advanced 450 to 500 km into our nation on the northwestern axis, 450 to 600 km on the western axis, and 300 to 350 km on the southwestern axis. In 3 weeks of war the enemy had captured Latvia, Lithuania, and Belorussia. Soviet forces had abandoned vast territories in the Ukraine and Moldavia.

The enormous scope of military operations and the exceptional intensity of the battles and engagements caused high losses on both sides. According to the statements of many German generals and military historians, the fascist German army's losses during the first weeks of the war in Eastern Europe were in no way comparable to the losses in all the campaigns in the west put together. According to Halder's data, by 13 July the German army had lost about 100,000 men killed, wounded, and missing in action. The enemy suffered enormous losses in combat equipment. By 14 July the fascist German army had lost around 50 percent of its tanks,[18] more than 20 percent of which were combat losses. In the tank groups, because of the high losses, the combat capability of the units was noticeably reduced. By 5 July German aviation had lost 807 aircraft, and by 19 July, 1,284.[19]

During this period the Soviet Armed Forces' losses were also considerable. The troops of the Western Front suffered particularly large losses.

Soviet military leaders, despite the exceptionally difficult situation, were able comparatively rapidly to restore command and control, which had been disrupted during the first days of the war, and to get control of the course of events and organize to repel the enemy. This was one of the main reasons that the fascist German command was unable to defeat the Soviet forces on a scale that would make it possible for the Hitlerite army to attain a rapid, nonstop advance on all the decisive axes toward the country's most important administrative, political, and economic centers, as was provided for in the Barbarossa plan.

Thus, because of the active operations of the forces in the first strategic echelon, and because of the entry of the strategic reserves into battle, the resistance of Soviet forces by mid-July had risen sharply along the entire Soviet-German Front. In the Baltic the front stabilized for a time on the line of Pyarnu and Tartu. On the Leningrad axis the enemy advance was halted for an entire month on the Luga River. On the western axis fascist German forces were bogged down for almost 2 months in the fierce Smolensk engagement. Enemy attacks were successfully repelled by the armies of the Southwestern Front in the sector of the Korosten Fortified Area, on the approaches to the Dnepr, and on the Dnepr near Kiev and further south.

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The initial period of the war was the first and most complex stage of the summer-fall campaign of 1941. A tremendous military force attacked the Soviet nation, and our Armed Forces had to go over to a strategic defense. Defensive operations were conducted under conditions of fascist German air supremacy, deep breakthroughs by enemy tank groupings, and the formation of broad gaps in the strategic front. Nevertheless, Soviet forces defended with exceptional persistence and vigor. Wherever possible a firm defense of occupied positions was

combined with numerous counterattacks, with stubborn battles in encirclement and escapes from encirclement, and with an active struggle by forces remaining in the enemy's rear.

The difficult conditions under which the initial defensive operations of the Soviet Armed Forces took place complicated and sometimes entirely ruled out the possibility of applying fundamentally correct premises of military theory on the creation of a deeply echeloned defense set up to withstand tank and air attacks. The hasty switch to the defensive by armies and fronts on unprepared lines, which had meager antitank and antiaircraft resources, made the defense extremely vulnerable. In addition, our armies and fronts, inferior to the enemy in strength and equipment, were forced to conduct defensive operations over vast areas: 100 to 120 km for the armies and 300 to 500 km for the fronts. This forced front and army commanders to include almost all of their forces in the first echelon. The linear arrangment of the troops deprived the defense of depth and stability.

Events in the first weeks of the war fully demonstrated that the fascist German command had clearly overestimated the capabilities of its armed forces and had erred seriously in appraising the endurance of the Soviet nation and the strength and capabilities of the Red Army. It had clearly underestimated the morale and political stability of the Soviet people and our country's ability to rapidly mobilize and deploy large strategic reserves and to commit them to battle on decisive axes. When the High Command committed large strategic reserves in battles along the Dnepr, the Hitlerite command's plans for an uninterrupted development of its advance to Smolensk and then to Moscow were thwarted.

Encountering constantly growing resistance in all sectors of the vast Soviet-German Front, the Hitlerite command had to scatter the efforts of its forces in many directions. This weakened the power of their attacks and reduced the rates of advance. By the end of July the Hitlerite high command had to order Army Group Center to go over to the defensive on the Moscow axis and to thoroughly review the plan for the further conduct of the war.

Only a few months had passed after the start of the war when the Red Army, after exhausting and weakening the enemy in defensive engagements, followed attacks on the flanks of the Soviet-German Front near Tikhvin and Rostov with a crushing attack against the fascist German army near Moscow. The counteroffensive near Moscow signaled the start of a fundamental turn not only in the Great Patriotic War, but in World War II as a whole. It laid to rest the Hitlerite plan for a blitzkrieg war against the Soviet Union and dispelled the myth of the fascist German army's invincibility. The victory near Moscow was graphic proof of the stability and vitality of the Soviet state and social structure and of the inexhaustible morale and political stability of the Soviet people and their army. This victory greatly increased the international prestige of the Soviet Union

and its Armed Forces, had a decisive effect on the unity of the antifascist coalition, and gave momentum to the national liberation movement in the countries occupied by Germany. The defeat of fascist German forces near Moscow was a guarantee of the inevitable defeat of fascism and the triumph of peoples fighting for their freedom and national independence.

Notes

1. See *Great Patriotic War*, II, 16, 17, 18, 20.
2. Zhukov, p. 240.
3. *Great Patriotic War*, II, 31.
4. *Mirovaya voyna 1939-1945 gg. Sbornik statey* [The World War 1939-1945: A Collection of Articles] (Moscow: Izdatel'stvo inostrannoy literatury, 1957), p. 163. [Hereafter cited as *World War 1939-1945*—U.S. Ed.]
5. F. Halder, *Voyennyy dnevnik* [War Diary] (Moscow: Voyenizdat, 1971), III, Bk. 2, pp. 38, 51, 54, 57, 60. [Hereafter cited as Halder—U.S. Ed.]
6. Ibid., p. 60.
7. See Lenin, XXVI, 224.
8. *The CPSU on the USSR Armed Forces*, p. 356.
9. *Pravda*, 28 June 1941.
10. See *Great Patriotic War*, II, 54.
11. *World War 1939-1945*, p. 160.
12. *Top Secret!*, p. 241.
13. Ibid., p. 243.
14. Halder, III, Bk. 2, pp. 99-100.
15. See *50 Years of the USSR Armed Forces*, p. 278.
16. See *Great Patriotic War*, II, 61.
17. See *50 Years of the USSR Armed Forces*, p. 278.
18. See Halder, III, Bk. 2, pp. 130, 148.
19. See *World War 1939-1945*, p. 472.

Chapter 12. Preparing for and Making a Surprise Initial Attack After Opening a New Strategic Front (From the Experience of the Soviet Armed Forces' 1945 Campaign in the Far East)

The coalition character of World War II, its enormous scope, and the entry into the war of various nations at different times made inevitable the creation of new strategic fronts as military operations progressed. They were opened either in accord with plans laid out in advance or under the influence of the changing military and political situation, which forced the main strategic efforts to be shifted from one strategic front or theater of operations to another. During the war the belligerents frequently opened new fronts of military operations against nations not participating in the war, while, on the other hand, nations drawn into the war would open a new front against one of the participants.

Thus, in its attempt to systematically defeat its European enemies, and under plans worked out ahead of time, fascist Germany first concentrated the main mass of its armed forces for the attack against Poland and then for attacks against Poland's western allies. Following the defeat of allied forces, Germany opened a new strategic front and unleashed war against the Soviet Union.

Nations of the anti-Hitlerite coalition also opened new strategic fronts during the course of World War II. Furthermore, the difference in the political goals pursued in the war by the USSR and by England and the U.S. had a direct influence on the choice of time and place for opening new strategic fronts. In 1940, for example, following France's defeat and the evacuation of its own forces from the continent, England rejected the idea of restoring the strategic land front in Western Europe against fascist Germany, its main enemy. England shifted its efforts to the secondary theaters of operations (the Mediterranean, North Africa, and the Near East), pursuing its own imperialist goals. As is well known, the Anglo-American command did not open a new strategic front in Western Europe until the final stage of the war, when fascist Germany had been thoroughly weakened by the war in the east and it had become clear that the USSR alone could rapidly complete the defeat of Germany.

The Soviet Union was pursuing other political goals when, 3 months after fascist Germany's defeat, it declared war against militarist Japan and opened a new strategic front of military operations in the Far East. The Soviet Union considered it an international duty to the peoples enslaved by the Japanese aggressors to hasten the end of World War II, to join together with its allies to drive the Japanese occupiers from the nations of Asia, and to help the peoples of China, Korea, and other Asian nations to acquire their national freedom and independence.

On 8 August 1945 the Soviet government announced that in support of the Potsdam Agreement signed by the allies on 26 July, it had accepted the proposal to enter the war against Japan. "The Soviet Government," the declaration stated, "feels that such a policy on its part is the only means of hastening the approach of peace, of relieving the peoples from further sacrifices and suffering, and of making it possible for the Japanese people to avoid the dangers and destruction experienced by Germany following its rejection of unconditional surrender."[1]

At the same time, the Soviet Union, interested in reliably strengthening its positions in the Far East, before entering the war against Japan announced to the allied powers at war with Japan that after the war it would make the following demands: retention of the status quo for Outer Mongolia (the Mongolian People's Republic); restoration of Russia's rights violated by Japan's treacherous attack in 1904, specifically the return to the Soviet Union of the southern part of Sakhalin and all adjacent islands; and, finally, the return of the Kurile Islands to the Soviet Union.[2]

These conditions of the Soviet government were accepted by the governments of the allied powers.

The problem of opening a new strategic front by transferring the main efforts from the European theater of operations to the Far East was successfully solved in the Soviet Union's war against militarist Japan, and beneficial experience was acquired in preparing for and carrying out a surprise crushing attack at the start of military operations. The campaign in the Far East is also of interest because despite its tremendous scope, it was the shortest campaign of World War II and produced the greatest results. Between 9 August and 2 September the Soviet Armed Forces destroyed the Kwantung Army—the main striking force of Japanese imperialism's ground forces—thus influencing to a critical degree Japan's decision to surrender unconditionally.

A distinguishing feature of the Soviet-Japanese war was that this war was concluded victoriously with one major strategic offensive operation, known as the Manchurian operation, and with the South Sakhalin offensive operation and Kurile assault operation, which were coordinated with the major operation but were comparatively small in size.

1. The Military and Political Situation by the Start of the Campaign and the Plan of the Japanese Command

The military and political situation that had developed in the Far East by August 1945 was characterized by Japan's still great capabilities for waging war and by continued stubborn resistance to the joint U.S. and English armed forces. In the estimates of the American and English commands, Japan could be forced to an unconditional surrender not earlier than 1946–1947 without the support of the Soviet Union.

Japan's domestic political situation in 1945 was very difficult. Its economy had been thoroughly undermined by the 8-year war in China and the 4-year war in the Pacific, and it was only with difficulty that it could make up for the enormous losses suffered by its armed forces.

Japan's foreign political situation was difficult as well. The U.S. and England, constantly increasing the might of their attacks, were approaching the Japanese homeland. The unconditional surrender of fascist Germany deprived the Japanese militarists of their most reliable ally and put Japan in a situation of international isolation.

Nevertheless, the Japanese government rejected the proposal of the U.S., English, and Chinese governments on a halt to military operations and on unconditional surrender and resolved "to persistently continue the advance until the successful conclusion of the war."[3] Hoping for disagreements between the allies, the Japanese government felt that it would be able to secure advantageous conditions from the U.S. and England for concluding a peace.

The Japanese army and navy still represented an impressive military force. There were over 7 million men under arms, including 5.9 million men in the army and air force, more than 10,000 aircraft, and around 500 combat ships of various classes.[4]

The Soviet Armed Forces were to enter a war against a strong enemy that had far from lost its combat capability and belief in victory.

Manchuria, Inner Mongolia, and north Korea, on whose territory military operations took place, covered 1.5 million sq km. The land theater of operations stretched 1,500 km from north to south and 1,200 km from west to east. The length of the state border shared by the USSR and the Mongolian People's Republic with Manchuria and Korea, on which Soviet forces were concentrated for the coming offensive, was over 4,000 km. The extent of the naval theater of operations, where the operations of the Soviet Pacific Fleet were conducted, stretched south for around 4,000 miles (approximately 7,500 km).

In geographic and climatic conditions, the area of the coming combat operations was exceptionally complex. The large mountain systems and ranges (the Greater Khingan in the west, the Ilkuri Shan and Lesser Khingan in the north, and the Eastern Manchurian system in the east) formed an inaccessible barrier 100 to 400 km wide blocking all the routes from the Mongolian People's Republic and the Transbaykal, Amur, and Maritime areas into the central regions of Manchuria. Stretching for hundreds of kilometers in the west were hot, waterless, sandy deserts and rocky mountains. The mountain systems and ranges seemed to be reinforced by broad and deep border rivers—the Argun, Amur, Ussuri, and Tumen—which during the summer rains (four-fifths of the annual precipitation falls in July–August) acquired the significance of defensive lines on an operational scale. The road network was poorly developed. On the whole, the area of combat operations was a mountain-taiga, swamp, and mountain-desert terrain that made it possible to fight with operational field forces and even smaller formations only on certain axes hundreds of kilometers apart. The most important operational axes were covered by the enemy in 17 fortified areas (8 of them located on the maritime axis) with a total length of over 1,000 km. The operational capacity of the individual fortified areas was designed for 1 to 3 infantry divisions.

In this vast and inaccessible theater of operations Soviet forces were opposed by the million-man Kwantung Army, which was made up of four Japanese fronts and one independent army. Including the satellite forces, there were over 1.2 million men (not counting strategic reserves and armed detachments of reservists). The Kwantung Army had 5,000 guns, 1,115 tanks, and 1,900 aircraft.[5]

The plan worked out by the Japanese command in the spring of 1945 had a defensive character, but also allowed for the conduct of a counteroffensive. Its basic idea consisted in using a stubborn defense in fortified border areas and on advantageous natural lines to prevent the breakthrough of Soviet forces into the central regions of Manchuria and Korea. This idea was to be carried out by the covering forces: the army of Manchukuo, the garrisons of border troops, and part of the field forces of the Kwantung Army (up to one-third of the forces in all). The main forces of the Kwantung Army were concentrated in central Manchuria near vital rail and highway junctions that would make it possible to carry out maneuvers and to bring up units on threatened axes and deploy them on advantageous lines while at the same time maintaining the compact grouping of these forces. The main forces had the mission of putting an end to the Red Army's deep breakthroughs and stopping the advancing troops; powerful counterattacks were to be made on any of the operational axes. Once the Kwantung Army had been reinforced with strategic reserves, and when the situation was favorable, it was to go over to a counteroffensive, to restore the broken front, and then to invade Soviet territory. If the outcome of the defensive engagement was unfavorable, then it was proposed that the army be pulled back to the line of Changchun, Mukden, and Chinchou. If this line also could not be

held, the main forces of the Kwantung Army were to be pulled back into Korea and Soviet forces would be repelled on the line of the Tumen and Yalu rivers.

In June–July 1945, under this plan, the forces of the Kwantung Army were regrouped and the defensive lines were prepared.

2. The Plan for the Defeat of the Kwantung Army

The plan of the Soviet Supreme High Command provided for the defeat of the Kwantung Army and the liberation of the territories occupied by it in a rapid operation and in such a manner that the enemy would be unable to withdraw its forces from Manchuria and north Korea. Our forces were to make two main attacks—one from the territory of the Mongolian People's Republic and the other from the Maritime Area—as well as several auxiliary attacks along axes converging on the center of Manchuria to split up and rapidly defeat the Kwantung Army's main forces unit by unit. Consequently, there was to be a double deep enveloping maneuver to encircle the main forces of the Kwantung Army. This was planned on axes that would allow the Soviet forces to quickly deprive the Kwantung Army of lines of communications with the homeland, with north Korea, where forces of the 17th Front were holding the defenses, and with the Peking region, where the Northern Front was. The plan of the Soviet Supreme High Command was to make crushing blows aimed at encircling and destroying the main forces of the Kwantung Army. The liberation of South Sakhalin and the Kurile Islands was dependent on achieving this main goal.

The defeat of the Kwantung Army was to be carried out by the forces of three fronts (the Transbaykal, 1st and 2nd Far Eastern), the Pacific Fleet, and the Red Banner Amur Flotilla. The fronts were to be deployed on three strategic axes: the Transbaykal Front on the Transbaykal-Manchurian axis, the 2nd Far Eastern Front on the Amur-Manchurian, and the 1st Far Eastern Front on the Maritime-Manchurian.

The forces of the Transbaykal Front were to play the main role in defeating the Kwantung Army. The rapid advance of the forces of this front against such major enemy points as Mukden and Changchun would determine the outcome of the battle. The attack by the forces of the 1st Far Eastern Front in the direction of Kirin by the shortest route would bring them to a linkup with the forces of the Transbaykal Front. Thus, the ring of encirclement would be closed.

The composition of these fronts was much stronger than that of the 2nd Far Eastern Front.

The Transbaykal Front had four combined arms armies, a tank army, a group of Soviet-Mongolian troops, an air army, an air defense army, and a considerable number of reinforcement formations and other units. In all, the front numbered 654,000 men, 7,000 guns and mortars, 2,416 tanks and self-propelled guns, 1,360 antitank guns, 601 antiaircraft guns, 583 rocket launchers, and 1,334 aircraft.

The 1st Far Eastern Front included four combined arms armies, a mechanized corps, a cavalry division, the Maritime Group, an air army, and an air defense army. In the number of reinforcement formations and units, it was somewhat inferior to the Transbaykal Front. The front had 586,000 men, 8,600 guns and mortars, 1,860 tanks and self-propelled guns, 1,538 antitank guns, 504 antiaircraft guns, 516 rocket launchers, and 1,158 aircraft.

The 2nd Far Eastern Front had considerably fewer personnel, tanks, guns, and aircraft. It included three combined arms armies, an independent rifle corps, the Kamchatka Defensive Area, an air army, an air defense army, and reinforcement formations and units. The front numbered 337,000 men, 4,400 guns and mortars, 1,280 tanks and self-propelled guns, 808 antitank guns, 1,280 antiaircraft guns, and 1,095 aircraft.[6]

The overall balance of forces was in favor of the Soviet forces, which outnumbered the enemy by a factor of 1.2 in personnel, 4.8 in tanks and self-propelled guns, 4.8 in artillery, and 2.5 in aviation. The balance of forces on the strategic axes was somewhat different.

On the Transbaykal-Manchurian axis our forces were superior to the Kwantung Army by a factor of 1.7 in personnel, 8.6 in guns, 18 in mortars, and 5 in tanks and self-propelled guns; on the Maritime-Manchurian axis, by 1.5 in personnel, 4 in guns, and 8 in tanks and self-propelled guns (our forces on this axis had an overwhelming advantage in mortars); on the Amur-Manchurian axis, by 1.4 in personnel, 2 in guns, 8.2 in mortars, and 8 in tanks and self-propelled guns. Thus, on the axes of the main attacks our forces were vastly superior to the enemy's.[7]

The offensive was to be developed on a front with a total length of around 5,000 km. The depth of the planned strategic operation reached 600 to 800 km, and the duration was 20 to 24 days. These figures also determined the planned rates of advance: 3 to 10 km per day for the 1st Far Eastern Front (considering the breakthrough of fortified areas and the crossing of mountain-taiga and swamp terrain); 13 km per day for the 2nd Far Eastern Front (considering the crossing of the Amur and the breakthrough of fortified areas); and 23 km for the rifle troops and 60 to 70 km per day for the mobile forces of the Transbaykal Front (considering the crossing of the Greater Khingan Mountain Range).

The unique missions assigned to these forces and the specific features of the conditions under which combat operations were to be carried out had a substantial influence on the employment of the different services in these operations.

The **ground forces** were confronted with complex missions. They had to break through the fortified areas, defeat the covering forces in the border zone, cross large rivers, overcome swamps, forests, desert terrain, and mountain ranges, and rapidly reach the Manchurian plain. Accomplishing these missions required the creation of powerful assault groupings on the axes of the fronts' main attacks.

The first echelon of the Transbaykal Front had a tank army and a group of Soviet-Mongolian troops, while the tank formations and units of the combined arms armies and rifle corps, along with their reinforcements, were to fight as powerful forward detachments. This was dictated by the need to rapidly cross the desert terrain and the Greater Khingan Range to preempt the enemy in bringing up reserves to this strong natural defensive barrier.

In the 1st Far Eastern Front the terrain ruled out the possibility of the massed use of tank and mechanized forces in the first operational echelon. To increase the breakthrough capacity of the combined arms armies and formations, they were reinforced by tank brigades and self-propelled artillery regiments. After breaking through the enemy defenses, these brigades and units were to be used as forward detachments. When the defensive fortifications were broken through, the 10th Mechanized Corps was to be committed to battle to a depth of 100 to 150 km.

The forces of the 2nd Far Eastern Front were to cross the Amur and Ussuri rivers, break through the fortified areas and develop the offensive in the forest, swamp, and impassable mountain-taiga terrain. This circumstance forced the use of the tank formations and units as forward detachments of the armies and corps on tank-accessible axes only to the operational depth.

Thus, depending on terrain and enemy defenses, the tank and mechanized forces were moved up to the first echelons of the fronts and armies either at the start or during the operation. This made it possible for the troops to develop high rates of advance.

The group of Soviet-Mongolian forces was to be used on the right flank of the Transbaykal Front.

To ensure surprise in the initial attack, the **air forces** of the three fronts and of the Pacific Fleet, about 5,000 aircraft, did not conduct any reconnaissance flights before the start of the offensive.

At the start of the offensive the air armies of the fronts were to make massed attacks to assist friendly forces in breaking through enemy fortified areas. In

addition, the air armies were to disrupt enemy communications, destroy major military objectives in the deep rear, conduct reconnaissance over the entire depth of the theater of operations, and support the advancing forces, particularly the mobile formations, by covering them against enemy air attacks.

On all the fronts aviation assets were to be massed on the axes of the main attacks. On the axis of the main attack in the Transbaykal Front approximately 85 percent of the 12th Air Army's aircraft were to be used; in the 1st Far Eastern Front 70 percent of the 9th Air Army's aircraft were to be used; and in the 2nd Far Eastern Front (only in the zone of the 15th Army) 50 percent of the 10th Air Army's aircraft were to be used. There was centralized command of the aviation in the 1st and 2nd Far Eastern fronts. In the Transbaykal Front, because of the massive expanse of the operation, part of the aviation formations and units was put under operational control of the commanders of the armies and the group of Soviet-Mongolian forces.

The 12th Air Army's transport aviation (two air transport divisions) was to be used to supply fuel, ammunition, and water to the 6th Guards Tank Army after the tank army, in its advance, had broken away a significant distance from the combined arms armies and supply organs.

The Pacific Fleet's mission was to assist the forces of the 1st Far Eastern Front in defeating the Kwantung Army in Manchuria and north Korea, and to aid the 16th Army of the 2nd Far Eastern Front in liberating South Sakhalin and the Kurile Islands. The fleet was also to disrupt enemy sea communications in the Sea of Japan while defending our own sea communications.

The Red Banner Amur Flotilla was to support the crossing of the Amur and Ussuri, and, after the ships had gone up the Sungari, was to assist the forces of the 1st and 2nd Far Eastern fronts in the battle for fortified areas and enemy strongpoints.

The air defense armies of the fronts had the mission of covering the troop unloading, concentration, and deployment areas and the major strategic objectives in the tactical rear.

The operational formation of the forces of the fronts strictly corresponded to the plan of the coming operation. The Transbaykal Front was formed in two echelons. In the first echelon there were three combined arms armies, a tank army, and the group of Soviet-Mongolian forces; in the second echelon there was one combined arms army. This army was to advance behind the tank army and, after the tank army had broken away from the main forces of the front, was to fill in the gap between the two adjacent armies of the first echelon. In the reserve of the commander of the front were two rifle divisions, one tank division, and some reinforcement units. The 2nd Far Eastern Front had a single-echelon formation. This ensured great strength for the initial attack and high

rates of advance for the breakthrough of fortified zones and defensive lines. The reserve of the front consisted of two rifle corps and a cavalry division. The mobile group was made up of a mechanized corps with reinforcements. The forces of the 2nd Far Eastern Front were formed up in a single echelon, and the reserve of the front consisted of a rifle division and a fortified area.

The massing of men and equipment on the axes of the main attacks of the fronts and armies was carried out boldly and decisively. The Transbaykal Front was deployed in a zone 2,300 km across, active combat operations were carried out on a 1,500-km front, and the main forces (up to 70 percent of all the infantry and 90 percent of all the tanks, artillery, and aviation) were concentrated over a zone of 400 km. The 1st Far Eastern Front advanced in a zone 700 km across, and the main attack was made in a zone of about 100 km.

The massing of men and equipment was carried out on the operational axes by allocating major reinforcements to the armies of the first echelon. For example, on the Transbaykal Front the 39th Army was reinforced by a tank division, two tank brigades, an artillery breakthrough corps, and a number of special units; the 6th Guards Tank Army was reinforced by two motorized rifle divisions, two self-propelled artillery brigades, a cannon artillery brigade, four independent tank battalions, an antiaircraft artillery division, and a number of special units. All the armies of the front and the group of Soviet-Mongolian forces were formed up in two echelons and had formations and independent units with reinforcements in the reserve.

The regrouping and concentration of the forces. In the Far East in the spring of 1945 there were up to 40 regular divisions that made up the Transbaykal and Far Eastern fronts and the Maritime Group.* These forces were to accomplish defensive missions. The troops, armed mainly with outdated weaponry, were poorly equipped.

To create the required grouping of men and equipment, it was necessary in a short period to carry out the largest regrouping of forces in history and the transfer of combat equipment and supplies from the European theater of operations to the Far East and Transbaykal area, a distance of 9,000 to 12,000 km, over the single Trans-Siberian railroad.

In April 1945 the command of the former Karelian Front was redeployed to the Maritime area, and after the defeat of fascist Germany, the command of the Second Ukrainian Front arrived in the Transbaykal area. From May 1945 until the start of the operation, the 5th Army was shifted from East Prussia to the Far East as part of the 1st Far Eastern Front, while the Transbaykal Front received the 39th Army from Konigsberg and the 53rd and 6th Guards tank

*By a directive of Supreme High Command Headquarters on 2 August 1945, the Maritime Forces Group was renamed the 1st Far Eastern Front, and the 1st Far Eastern Front became the 2nd Far Eastern Front. Author's note.

armies from Czechoslovakia. A large number of independent tank, artillery, aviation, engineer, and other units and formations also arrived in the Far East.

During the concentration of forces in the Far East more than 2,500 trains crossed the Trans-Siberian railroad, including 1,666 with troops and over 1,000 with combat equipment and materiel. In total, this was 136,000 cars.[8] Cargo from Vladivostok, Komsomolsk-on-the-Amur, and other regions in the Far East moved to the front in a massive flow. In addition, there were troop movements between the fronts: these covered up to 1,500 km by rail and 250 to 600 km on foot and by transport. Thus, about 30 rifle, tank, and cavalry divisions were redeployed.

Because of the poorly developed railroad network, the command of the Transbaykal Front was forced to unload all its motorized formations and artillery with mechanized traction at the stations and sidings between Chita and Karymskaya and send them under their own power to the assembly areas, which were 500 to 600 km from the unloading areas. The distance covered daily over the hot desert terrain was 100 to 150 km for the tank and mechanized troops and 40 to 50 km for the rifle formations.

Despite the extreme difficulties encountered in regrouping the forces to the Far East, it was completed on time. This was greatly aided because by a GKO decision a large amount of weapons and combat equipment was delivered to the new theater of operations ahead of time from industrial enterprises relatively nearby, in Siberia, Vladivostok, Komsomolsk-on-the-Amur, and elsewhere. Part of the weapons and combat equipment of the rebased troops was left at the old deployment areas.

Preparation of the theater of operations. The complex conditions in the Far Eastern theater of operations required an enormous amount of work for the engineer support of the force buildup and deployment. To carry out this work on time, the three fronts received 18 field-engineer and pontoon-bridge brigades and 30 independent engineer units for various purposes. The engineer troops laid 1,390 km of new road and repaired 5,000 km of the old. On the Transbaykal Front 1,194 wells were built, 322 were repaired, and 21 were equipped and capped as reserve.

For orientation in the desert terrain, special indicators of various types were created, for example, in the form of earthen pyramids 0.8 to 1 m high. Some 6,250 such indicators were built. In addition, 775 km of roads were constructed, 269 km of cross-country roads were completed, 2,389 shelters for combat equipment and motor transport were dug, 12,050 fascines and 2 km of wooden panels were prepared for laying passageways across swampy areas, and so forth.[9]

Primary importance was attached to concealing the concentration and deployment of the forces in the starting areas for the offensive. All movements of for-

mations and units were carried out only at night. On the Transbaykal Front all the combat equipment of the troops arriving in the assembly or concentration areas was stored during the day in specially prepared shelters and covered with camouflage nets. Standing duty on the state border was kept under peacetime conditions. The radios of the newly arrived field forces and formations operated only for receiving. The cutting of passageways through obstacles on our territory was done only at night. Our forces moved up to the starting areas during the night of 9 August. The directive for the start of operations was not given to the troop commanders of the fronts until 7 August at 1630 almost on the eve of the offensive.

The intense work by the engineer forces and the concealment measures of the Soviet command created favorable conditions for making a surprise attack and rapidly breaking through the enemy defenses.

Logistics support and organization. The creation of reserves of materiel in the Far East and the organization of logistics support itself were of great importance for the success of the strategic operation. In considering this, Supreme High Command Headquarters provided for the early buildup of the necessary logistics support, which was undertaken with particular intensity from December 1944. By the start of the war the reserves of materiel that had been created fully provided the forces with everything necessary to conduct combat operations.

The logistics units and installations of the 1st and 2nd Far Eastern fronts were deployed on sections of the Trans–Siberian railroad with eight or nine supply stations and located in the organic and army-level rear areas (25 to 150 km from the deployment areas). The distribution points were based at the railroad stations. The situation was worse on the Transbaykal Front: in its rear there was not even the start of a railroad network. Many of its logistics units and installations, including the main depots with the front stores, were forced to stay on a single railroad spur that ended with a section of narrow-gauge track. The depth of the rear area of the Transbaykal Front was 100 km on the left wing and reached 600 km on the right. The army-level rear areas, along with the organic rear, also had a great depth, reaching 100 to 450 km. Characteristic for this front was that the tank army was assigned its own rear area. This was because it was in the first echelon of the front. Taking into consideration that in the first days of the operation the tank army could be separated by a great distance from the main grouping of the front and the logistics elements, the front was assigned two air transport divisions (up to 200 aircraft).

In the 1st and 2nd Far Eastern fronts each army (with the exception of the 16th and 35th) had its own railroad section with several supply stations. On the Transbaykal Front only the 36th Army had its own railroad section and supply stations. The remaining armies of this front put their supply depots "on the ground," closer to the troops, at a distance of 30 to 100 km. They were 240 to 500 km from the front-line depots.

Thus, the army-level supply depots were at a distance from the troops that could be considered normal, but at a distance from the front-line bases that clearly exceeded the norm. This required the construction of extensive roads and the manufacture of a quite large number of motor vehicles. The motor vehicles had to have increased cross-country capability and a large load capacity. Motor transport played a decisive role in shipments to the front. The greatest amount of motor transport was assigned to the Transbaykal Front and to the 1st Far Eastern Front.

The organization of command and control. Supreme High Command Headquarters, in considering the great remoteness of the new theater of operations, the enormous expanse of the coming campaign, and the use of large forces in this campaign, set up in Khabarovsk the High Command of the Soviet Forces in the Far East. The commander in chief of the Soviet forces in the Far East was in command of all the ground forces, aviation, air defense forces, naval forces, and local military control organs. The commander in chief had great authority. He was to exercise control over the preparation of front- and army-level operations, take measures to improve logistics support and accelerate the regrouping of the forces in the theater of operations, and, with the start of the offensive, was to coordinate the operations of the fronts. The commander in chief was responsible for the continuous operation of the Trans-Siberian railroad from Baykal to Vladivostok. He was given the right to make contact with the allied command and conduct talks on surrender with the commander of the Kwantung Army.

The coordination of naval and air operations with the ground forces was carried out by the commander in chief of the navy and by the commander of the Red Army Air Force. Logistics support problems were solved by the Red Army's deputy chief of logistics working with a group of representatives from the central logistics installations.

Supreme High Command Headquarters and the General Staff kept constant control over the preparations for and actual conduct of the operation and had direct contact with the commanders of the fronts and the navy.

The enormous expanse of the theater of operations created great difficulties for command and control. The distance between the staff of the commander in chief and the front staffs reached 900 to 3,000 km, 400 to 1,000 km between the staffs of the fronts and the armies, and 50 to 400 km between the armies and the corps staffs.

The operation had to be prepared in deepest secrecy from the enemy. This was achieved by making flexible use of different means of communications, in particular, line communications (before the operation, it was forbidden to use radio), liaison aircraft and other means of transport, and personal contact

between the commander in chief and the commanders of the fronts and the armies, and between the commanders of the fronts and the commanders of armies and formations.

Despite the extremely difficult geographic conditions of the theater of operations and the quite strict deadlines imposed by Supreme High Command Headquarters for the preparation of the operation, the titanic work in concentrating and deploying the forces met with complete success.

By the start of the operation the ground forces of all three fronts had been secretly deployed in the starting areas for the offensive, and their first echelons were on the state border. The air forces occupied the forward airfields in combat readiness to make massed attacks against the enemy. The Pacific Fleet was put under full alert.

3. Making the First Attack and Achieving the Goals of the War in the Campaign

The Soviet offensive that began during the night of 9 August 1945 (at 0010–0110 hours) was a surprise to the enemy. There was no preparatory artillery fire or air attack. The forces of the 1st Far Eastern Front went over to the offensive in a heavy rain.

During the first hours of the offensive the powerful forward detachments that had been created on all the fronts in the corps and divisions of the first echelon* defeated the enemy's covering units. They pushed into the gaps between the centers of resistance of the border fortifications and in doing so disrupted the system of enemy defenses. Where the enemy, in using these centers, put up stubborn resistance, it was sealed off by part of our forces, and then with direct laying of the regimental artillery and self-propelled guns was defeated and annihilated. Some 4.5 to 7.5 hours after the start of operations the forward detachments of the fronts went over to a general offensive.

The decisive operations of the forward detachments, which caused the enemy to retreat to the rear defensive lines, made it possible for the main forces to move ahead in columns on certain axes. This greatly accelerated their advance. Thus, on the first day of the offensive, the mobile forces of the Transbaykal Front, in overcoming enemy resistance, advanced 60 to 150 km, while the rifle formations pushed ahead 40 to 50 km.

*The forward detachments included from one to two companies up to a regiment of infantry mounted on vehicles; from a tank battalion up to a tank brigade; a battalion of self-propelled guns, a battalion of field artillery, a battalion or regiment of antitank artillery, an antiaircraft artillery battalion, and other units. Author's note.

On the first day of combat, because of stubborn enemy resistance and the difficult conditions of the taiga terrain, the offensive by the forces of the 1st Far Eastern Front developed slowly. However, on this day they were able to break through the heavily fortified enemy defenses to a depth of 5 to 20 km and thus create conditions to develop the advance in depth. The forces crossed the taiga, keeping the engineer reconnaissance, which marked the route, at the head of each column. Behind the engineer reconnaissance, in echelons one after another, came the tanks of the forward detachments. They broke down trees while laying cross-country routes up to 5 m wide; the infantry and field engineers of the forward detachments pulled away the downed timber, clearing these routes. Behind the forward detachments came the road and bridge units, continuing the work on the cross-country routes. Then came the advance guard, followed by the support detachments of the main forces.

The enemy put up extremely stubborn resistance against the forces of the 1st Far Eastern Front on the approaches to the Muling River and the town of Mutanchiang, and in battles for the city itself, which was a major center of the defensive line running along the Mutanchiang River.

On 16 August, after 5 days of bloody battles, the forces of the 1st Red Banner and 5th armies captured Mutanchiang. The enemy began a withdrawal, leaving more than 40,000 soldiers and officers killed on the battlefield. The Japanese forces were just as stubborn in defending the Fukien, Border, Tungning, and Hailar fortified areas and the town of Chiamussu.

On the Transbaykal Front the 6th Guards Tank Army advanced in two columns, with a distance between them of 50 to 70 km. In the first echelon two mechanized corps went ahead, and in the second, the tank corps. The corps followed along six to eight parallel routes in zones of 15 to 20 km each.

The advantage of the parallel movement of the mobile forces along several routes was that this achieved a relatively rapid crossing of areas of quicksand, reduced the overall depth of the columns, and increased the speed of march.

On approaching the Greater Khingan Mountain Range the 5th Tank Corps was moved into the first echelon because it had greater cross-country capacity in the mountain terrain than did the mechanized corps. The 5th Tank and 9th Mechanized corps crossed the Greater Khingan range along one road, while the 7th Mechanized Corps moved along two.

The 10th Mechanized Corps of the 1st Far Eastern Front came behind the forces of the 25th Army. Since it was impossible to bypass the army formations because of the lack of roads, the corps moved ahead during the infantry halts, and not with all its formations at once, but in comparatively small units. To carry out combat missions, the corps commander, after considering the very

confined conditions of the advance, assigned two forward detachments, each consisting of a reinforced tank brigade. One of them carried out the immediate mission of the corps, and the next the subsequent one.

Without reducing the rate of advance, in 6 days the forces of the fronts moved forward over the various axes from 50 to 400 km into enemy territory. By the end of the 10th day of the operation the Transbaykal Front had advanced 400 to 600 km, the 1st Far Eastern 200 to 300 km, and the 2nd Far Eastern Front up to 200 km.

The air force began combat operations at dawn on 9 August. It attacked the major railroad stations, bridges, and crossings to thwart the possible maneuver of enemy forces and prevent the organized withdrawal of the troops and the evacuation of combat equipment. Our aviation also attacked communications centers, fortified areas, major military objectives in Hailar, Changchun, Harbin, Kirin, and other strategically important targets.

Our fighter aviation covered the assault troop groupings.

The air force of the Pacific Fleet, together with formations of torpedo boats, attacked north Korean ports and coastal defense objectives. More than 30 enemy ships were sunk or damaged. The enemy fleet, caught by surprise, did not resist.

When the main forces of the fronts went over to the offensive, our ground attack and bomber aviation provided direct support for the troops.

Reconnaissance aviation conducted intensive reconnaissance of the enemy over a broad front and to the entire depth of the theater of operations. About 26 percent of the aircraft sorties of all the fighter aviation were used for reconnaissance work during the operation.

The employment of airborne assault forces was not planned ahead of time. The need for these forces was caused by the rapidity of the offensive, when it became necessary to accelerate the receiving of surrendered Japanese troops and to prevent the destruction of industrial enterprises and the removal and destruction of valuable materials by the enemy. The number of troops in the airborne parties fluctuated from 120 to 500 men. There was an intensive transfer of troops by air from 18 through 27 August, when the fighting was nearly over. The airborne assault forces included submachine gunners from the tank forces and personnel from the field-engineer assault brigade and independent airfield maintenance battalions. The assault groups were headed by members of the front staffs. Air transports with assault forces landed at permanent enemy airfields. Small groups of fighters provided cover for formations of air transports with assault forces en route and in the landing areas.

The Pacific Fleet saw action on two operational axes: off the eastern coast of Korea and around Sakhalin and the Kurile Islands. A major mission of the Pacific Fleet was to provide cover for the maritime flank of the 1st Far Eastern Front and, together with the forces of the 25th Army, to capture the ports on the northeastern coast of Korea. The fleet successfully carried out this mission. Thus, it landed four tactical assault parties on this coast and these captured the ports of Yuki, Rashin, Seishin, and Gensan.

The Pacific Fleet played a prominent role in the capture of South Sakhalin and the Kurile Islands, having landed several tactical assault parties on them. The ships of the Pacific Fleet did a great deal in carrying out large movements of troops and military cargo and disrupting enemy communications in the Sea of Japan.*

The combat operations of the Red Banner Amur Flotilla developed mainly on the Sungari and Sakhalin axes. The flotilla successfully carried out all its main missions. It supported the forces of the 2nd Far Eastern Front in their crossing of the Amur and Ussuri rivers and took an active part in neutralizing the enemy centers of resistance and strongpoints along the shores, using the fire from ships offshore. The ships of the Amur Flotilla landed assault forces in the area of advance of the 15th Army and provided essential fire support. By their fire the ships supported the operations of the forces advancing along the Sungari River and also transported troops along this river. The successful operations of the ships of the Red Banner Amur Flotilla secured the rapid rates of advance of the forces of the 2nd Far Eastern Front.

Command and control during the operation was carried out mainly by radio, as well as by flights by staff officers to the field to transmit or verify orders and instructions and to clarify the situation of the troops and their needs.

The movement of the columns over separate axes was controlled by liaison aircraft. On the army level and below, command and control was carried out in motion. The staffs of the divisions did not deploy. Stability and continuity of control were achieved by bringing the control posts as close as possible to the troops.

The radio network of the People's Commissariat of Communications was used for communications between the commander in chief of the Soviet forces in the Far East and the fronts. The armies were reinforced with front-type radios. Enormous work was done to create permanent communication lines and relay booster stations. All three fronts had line communications with the General Staff and with the commander in chief of the Far East forces

*On 22 August two submarines that had taken up station near the Japanese navy's base at Rumoi attacked two enemy transports. One of them was damaged and the other sunk. Author's note.

Aviation was widely used for communications between fronts and armies. During the operation front commanders themselves often flew out to the command posts of the commanders of the armies fighting on the main axes.

The great distance between the operational axes and the complexity of the terrain impeded the organization of cooperation. Great independence of operation had to be provided not only for field formations but also for smaller units.

Looking at the entire operation, cooperation was carefully thought out and smoothly accomplished. Its organization was evident in the assignment of missions to the various services of the armed forces and to strategic groupings, in the precise determination of the role and place of each of them in the operation, and in the establishment of the sequence and order of accomplishing the operational-strategic missions.

The operational cooperation between the troop groupings advancing on separate axes became possible only during the final stage of the operation.

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The crushing attacks by the forces of the Transbaykal and the 1st and 2nd Far Eastern fronts, the Pacific Fleet, and the Red Banner Amur Flotilla resulted in the rapid defeat of the Kwantung Army, the Manchukuo and Inner Mongolian Army, the Hsuan Army Group, half of the forces of the 5th Front, and the Sungari River Flotilla. Japan lost its main industrial and raw materials base in northeast China and on South Sakhalin, which accounted for a large part of its military and economic potential. All of this was decisive in bringing Japan's defeat and unconditional surrender.

The campaign conducted by Soviet forces in the Far East was truly one of blitzkrieg warfare, which had a decisive influence in eliminating the last center of World War II. Japanese historians point out that the Red Army's switch to the offensive in the Far East was a shattering blow for Japanese government leaders and was considerably more instrumental in their decision to halt resistance than were the American atomic bombs.[10]

After destroying the Kwantung Army in a blitzkrieg campaign, the Soviet forces fulfilled their international duty to the peoples of the Far East, oppressed by Japanese imperialism, and cleared the way for them to gain their freedom and national independence. At the same time, the Soviet Union received free access to the Pacific by liberating South Sakhalin and occupying the Kurile Islands.

The campaign conducted by Soviet forces in the Far East contributed a great deal to the development of the Soviet art of war, primarily to the art of preparing for and making the first crushing attack against an enemy at the start of a war.

Surprise in making the first attack was a decisive factor in achieving rapid success in the campaign. The Soviet command was able to keep the plan for the offensive, the time of entry into the war, and the locations and force of the initial main attacks a secret. The method of going over to the offensive at night, without aviation or artillery preparation, which was unusual for World War II, intensified the effect of the surprise of the first attack.

Front operations were distinguished by their great scope. Their actual depth coincided with the depth of the theater of operations.

Front operations of such tremendous scope were made possible by a whole system of closely coordinated measures, primary among which were the force and surprise of the initial attack and the use of mobile formations in the first echelon.

Although the offensive was conducted on a broad front, the main forces of fronts and armies operated in comparatively narrow zones. This made it possible to achieve an overwhelming superiority of men and equipment on the axes of the main attacks.

The offensive was characterized by high rates of advance. These were achieved through bold and determined operations by powerful forward detachments, which frequently broke away from the main forces in their push forward. The high rates of advance were also made possible because the tank forces were assigned a mission to the entire depth of the theater of operations at the start and strove to accomplish it at any cost. Powerful movement support detachments, which were included at all levels from the regiment up, played an important role in achieving high rates of advance.

The success of the operation was determined to a great extent by the skillful combat employment of our aviation and by our aviation's superiority over enemy aviation.

From the first day of the offensive the air force gained air supremacy and retained it to the end of the war. A specific feature of the combat use of aviation in the campaign was that it had to be used for many transportation operations: it transported around 17,000 men and 6,000 tons of various types of cargo, including 2,777 tons of fuel and 550 tons of ammunition.[11]

The use of airborne assault forces deserves attention. Created during the offensive, the airborne assault forces seized important military objectives in the

enemy's deep rear, thus making an active contribution to the operation's successful conclusion.

The orderly work of the logistics units played an important role in the successful conduct of the campaign. Starting with the State Defense Committee, which mobilized the country's material resources in good time to support the war against Japan, and ending with the commanders and logistics personnel in various units, all of the levels subordinated their work to the accomplishment of the main military and political mission: dealing a crushing defeat to the Kwantung Army as rapidly as possible.

The activity of the Communist Party, the Soviet government, and the military command to prepare for and make a crushing attack against imperialist Japan's armed forces took place during a time of great patriotic enthusiasm among the Soviet people and their Armed Forces. This was a result of the Soviet Union's outstanding victory over fascist Germany.

The tremendous experience accumulated by the Soviet Armed Forces in the war against fascist Germany was creatively applied in the new theater of operations and was undoubtedly one of the important factors contributing to the success of the operation.

The ideological, indoctrinational, and organizational work undertaken by military councils, commanders, and political organs created and continuously maintained a great driving energy among our fighting men that the Kwantung Army could not endure.

The Soviet campaign in the Far East was one of the classic campaigns of World War II.

Notes

1. *Vneshnyaya politika Sovetskogo Soyuza v period Otechestvennoy voyny. Dokumenty i materialy* [Foreign Policy of the Soviet Union During the Patriotic War: Documents and Materials] (Moscow: Gospolitizdat, 1947), III, 363.
2. Ibid., p. 111.
3. *Istoriya voyny na Tikhom okeane* [The History of the War in the Pacific] (Moscow: Izdatel'stvo inostrannoy literatury, 1958), II, 201. [Hereafter cited as *War in the Pacific*—U.S. Ed.]
4. See *Patriotic War Short History*, p. 538.
5. See *Final. Istoriko-memuarnyy ocherk o razgrome imperialisticheskoy Yaponii v 1945 g.* [The Finale: A Historical Memoir on the Defeat of Imperialist Japan in 1945] (Moscow: Izdatel'stvo "Nauka," 1966), p. 67. [Hereafter cited as *The Finale*—U.S. Ed.]
6. See *Operatsii Sovetskikh Vooruzhennykh Sil v Velikoy Otechestvennoy voyne 1941-1945 gg.* [Operations of the Soviet Armed Forces in the Great Patriotic War 1941-1945] (Moscow: Voyenizdat, 1959), IV, 631. [Hereafter cited as *Soviet Armed Forces Operations*—U.S. Ed.]
7. Ibid., p. 651.
8. See *Soviet Armed Forces Operations*, IV, 692.

9. See *The Finale*, pp. 119, 129-131.
10. See *War in the Pacific*, IV, 209.
11. See *The Finale*, p. 332.

Chapter 13. Specific Features of Initial Operations in the War in the Pacific

The Japanese militarists unleashed the war in the Pacific against the U.S., England, and their allies at a time when the Soviet Union was waging a heroic struggle against Hitlerite Germany, the main striking force of the fascist bloc. Fascist Germany's attack on the USSR was the signal for Japan to accelerate preparations for aggression against the USSR and to seize the rich colonial possessions of the U.S., England, and Holland: the Philippines, Malaya, Indonesia, Thailand, and Burma.

The occupation of these territories was the main goal of the strategic offensive of the Japanese forces in the initial period of the war in the Pacific. As far as an attack on the USSR, Japan's ruling circles, which had tested the Red Army's strength in battles near Lake Khasan and on the Khalkhin-Gol, while not halting preparations for an attack, decided to wait until Hitlerite Germany could achieve "decisive successes" on the Soviet-German Front and then to attack without risk. Through no fault of the Japanese militarists this military and political calculation was never carried out. . . .

The war in the Pacific began with a surprise attack by the Japanese armed forces against the Pacific possessions of the U.S., England, and Holland. Cherishing the hope almost right up until the final day that Japanese aggression would turn against the USSR, the political and military leaders of those nations were taken by surprise and were a long way from completing preparations to repel the attack.

For Japan, the main content of the initial period of the war in the Pacific was a strategic offensive begun on the first day of military operations; while for the U.S., England, and Holland, it was a strategic defense conducted to stop the enemy's advance.

With the start of the war the belligerents also carried out political and economic measures linked with the development of combat operations. Especially extensive measures were taken in the U.S.: industry was reorganized to meet war needs, general mobilization was hastily conducted, and decisive steps were taken to create an anti-Hitlerite coalition.

1. Characteristics of the Japanese Armed Forces' Strategic Offensive

As was outlined in the war plan, the Japanese armed forces developed a strategic offensive simultaneously in two vast theaters of operations: in the Pacific* and in Southeast Asia. Combat operations broke out over enormous expanses from the Hawaiian Islands to India.

Characteristic of the initial period of the war in the Pacific was that literally from its first day, Japan, like fascist Germany in Europe, carried out major strategic operations with definite goals and used forces that had been deployed ahead of time in the theaters of operations.

Japan's strategic offensive proceeded continuously for 5 months until the initial goals had been completely achieved.

The goals and content of the operations of the Japanese armed forces at this time can be divided into two main stages.

In the first stage (8 December 1941 until mid-February 1942) the principal goal of the strategic offensive was to defeat the main enemy groupings in the theaters of operations and to capture strategically important positions for the further development of the offensive in the depth of enemy territory. During the first operations the Japanese armed forces dealt a major defeat to the American fleet at Pearl Harbor and to the English fleet off the coast of Malaya, destroyed the main allied aviation forces at airfields in the Philippines and on the Malacca Peninsula, and defeated and captured the main grouping of English ground forces in Singapore and of American forces on the island of Luzon. The Japanese captured the Philippine Islands, the Malacca Peninsula, some islands in Indonesia, and the main naval bases in the western and southwestern parts of the Pacific. Japan opened up an almost unobstructed path for a rapid advance into Indonesia and the countries of Southeast Asia. It suffered very minor losses in achieving these major successes.

The second stage (from mid-February until the start of May 1942) included the operations to seize the richest regions of the Dutch East Indies—the islands of Java and Sumatra—and to capture Burma and strategically important regions in the southwestern part of the Pacific: New Guinea and the Solomon Islands. The Japanese forces were approaching India and Australia. The operations of the second stage were a direct continuation of the first operations. Part of the single strategic offensive, they began without any substantial pause.

*The Pacific Ocean is the largest ocean on the planet. Its area of 180 million sq km is greater than the total land area of the earth's surface. It extends 15,750 km east to west and 19,450 km north to south. The Pacific theater of operations included the seas adjacent to the ocean, the numerous archipelagos, and the continental coast of Asia, America, and the Australian continent. Author's note.

The approach of Japanese forces to the borders of India and the shores of Australia secured the Japanese leadership's compiete attainment of its immediate military and political goals. The captured territories allowed Japan to create a single defensive zone to restrain its enormous empire, as was provided for by the war plan. This zone ran from the Himalayan Mountains to the shores of the Indian Ocean, and then along the Malacca Peninsula and the islands of Indonesia to New Guinea. Then the defensive zone stretched across the neutral part of the Pacific and, including the Marshalls, ran up to the Kurile Islands.

In March 1942 the Japanese leadership made a decision to strengthen its positions in the Pacific for conducting an extended war against the U.S. There were plans to capture Port Moresby in the south (the island of New Guinea), the island of Midway (the Hawaiian Islands) in the central Pacific, and the Aleutian Islands in the north, thus moving the outer line of the defensive zone far to the east. A new period of the war in the Pacific began at the start of May and in June 1942 with the Japanese attempt to capture these strategically important points. The Japanese armed forces, after their defeat at Midway Island, went over to the strategic defense on the lines captured previously.

The main forces of the Japanese navy, most of the aircraft in naval aviation, and part of the ground forces took part in the strategic offensive in the Pacific and in Southeast Asia. The combat of the first strategic echelon was conducted by most of the ships of the so-called Combined Fleet, 700 aircraft of army aviation, 1,619 aircraft of land- and carrier-based aviation, 14 divisions and brigades, and 9 tank regiments; in all, approximately 230,000 men.

Left in the homeland were the covering forces for the Japanese islands, which made up the strategic reserve: 4 infantry and 10 training divisions, 11 brigades, around 700 aircraft, 6 battleships, 2 cruisers, and 36 destroyers. On the border with the Soviet Union, as before, the Kwantung Army was ready to go over to the offensive. It numbered 15 divisions, 24 infantry brigades (around 1 million men), and 560 aircraft. In China there were 21 divisions and 20 infantry brigades. They had 150 aircraft.

The largest grouping of Japanese ground forces was thus aimed against the USSR, while the main aviation and naval forces were used for combat operations against the U.S., England, and their allies. By such a distribution of men and equipment the Japanese command achieved superiority over its enemies in the Pacific in the number of aircraft, particularly in naval aviation, as well as in the number of aircraft carriers.

In numbers, the Japanese ground forces were inferior to the allied armies, but they were better armed, had combat experience, and were more combat-capable.

The creation of superiority over the enemy in air and naval forces was a consequence of the Japanese command's assignment to these services of the armed forces of a leading role in the strategic offensive in both theaters of operations.

An important feature of the offensive of the Japanese armed forces was that it was carried out on separate strategic and operational axes divided by vast expanses of water. In addition, on each strategic axis, the Japanese command used large groupings of army and naval forces in close operational and tactical cooperation.

On the **Hawaiian axis**, where the main forces of the U.S. Pacific Fleet were stationed, the main forces of the Japanese navy were active: a carrier task force (6 aircraft carriers with 360 aircraft) and a section of submarines (27 units). Part of the 4th Fleet and part of the ground forces (several battalions attached to the fleet) were used to seize the island bases on the approaches to Hawaii.

An army and navy grouping based on the Ryukyu Islands, Taiwan, and Palau was advancing on the **axis of the Philippine Islands**, the U.S. outpost in the Far East. This grouping was supported by major naval and army aviation forces. The defeat of the opposing enemy forces on this axis and the capture of the Philippines secured the further advance of Japanese forces in the direction of Indonesia from the east and provided for stable communications to develop the offensive in the southwestern Pacific.

On the **Malayan strategic axis** the offensive was undertaken by an army (three divisions), forces of the 2nd Fleet, and the Malayan Task Force, all of which were based in Indochina and on the island of Hainan. This was an important axis of operations for the Japanese armed forces. The Malacca Peninsula occupied the western flanking position of the entire region of operations and separated Indonesia from India. The defeat of the English forces and the seizure of Singapore, this key position at the outlet to the Indian Ocean, gave Japanese forces an opportunity to move toward Indonesia from the west and provided the navy an outlet to the Indian Ocean.

Three infantry divisions and the navy's main forces were assigned on the **central axis** to seize such important objectives of Japanese aggression as the islands of Borneo, Sumatra, and the pearl of the Dutch East Indies—the island of Java. The naval forces had been switched to performing this mission after carrying out the Hawaiian operation. The basing of the Japanese 11th Air Force on Formosa and near Saigon supported the operations of land-based naval aviation over virtually all the South China Sea.

Great importance was attached to the **southeastern axis**, which included the island of New Guinea, the Bismarck Archipelago, and the Solomon Islands.

The seizure of these regions broke U.S. communications with Australia and created the possibility of shifting military operations to the Australian continent. Initially on this axis the forces of the 4th Fleet and of several infantry battalions were used; later, the forces of two armies concentrated in the Caroline Islands were also used.

After the capture of the Malacca Peninsula the Japanese command took the forces of one army (two reinforced divisions) and began an offensive on the **Burma axis** supported by the operations of the main naval forces in the Indian Ocean.

Characteristic of the unleashing of military operations in the Pacific was the surprise of the first air attacks—which were extremely powerful—against enemy naval bases and enemy aviation on the ground. Because of these attacks the main forces of the U.S. Pacific Fleet in Pearl Harbor were destroyed and put out of action, American aviation in the Philippines was annihilated, and great damage was caused to England's air and naval forces in Malaya. The serious losses suffered by the allies from the attacks by Japanese aviation during the first days of the war led to a sharp change in the balance of forces at sea and in the air and had a substantial influence on the course and outcome of the initial operations. The Japanese armed forces were able to win air and sea supremacy, which in fact became the decisive condition in the success of the entire strategic offensive and in the seizure of the enemy's island and maritime territories.

The fight to win and maintain sea supremacy made up the main content of operations by the Japanese navy during the initial operations. Naval aviation, and carrier-based aviation above all, played the main role in winning a predominant position at sea. A powerful and highly maneuverable carrier strike force, which was first created by the Japanese command, was the main striking force of the Japanese navy. Carrier-based aviation destroyed the U.S. Pacific Fleet in Pearl Harbor, and somewhat later inflicted great losses on the English Eastern Fleet in the Indian Ocean. From 8 December 1941 through 9 April 1942—practically during the entire initial period of the war—this task force, operating continuously in the open ocean from the Hawaiian Islands to Ceylon, destroyed and put out of commission 8 battleships, an aircraft carrier, and more than 10 cruisers and destroyers without losing a single ship.[1]

Shore-based aviation also showed great effectiveness in battles against enemy naval forces. It destroyed the nucleus of the English Eastern Squadron in the South China Sea, as well as a number of ships of the U.S. Asiatic Fleet and the Dutch navy in the basin of the South Seas. Thus, it was precisely aviation (particularly carrier-based) that, after securing air supremacy, was the decisive force in winning sea supremacy.

The first operations convincingly showed that without air supremacy there could be no sea supremacy.

The strategic sea and air supremacy achieved by the Japanese from the start of the war provided for the development of the offensive without serious opposition from enemy naval and air power.

An essential feature in the offensive of the Japanese armed forces was the simultaneous conduct of joint army and naval operations and independent naval operations on the main strategic and operational axes.

During the first stage of the offensive three major operations were conducted simultaneously: the Hawaiian (naval), to destroy the main forces of the U.S. Pacific Fleet in Pearl Harbor, and the joint Philippine and Malayan army and naval operations. At this time individual operations were carried out to capture naval bases in the South China Sea, on the islands of Indonesia, and in the central and southwestern parts of the Pacific.

In the second stage of the offensive the Java operation was conducted to capture the islands of Java and Sumatra with the simultaneous destruction of the allied fleet, which had been sealed off in the Java Sea. The Burma operation also took place at this time, and naval operations were started to destroy the English navy in the Indian Ocean and to disrupt sea communications in the Bay of Bengal. In this stage too individual operations were carried out to seize naval bases and territories on the islands of New Guinea, the Bismarcks, and the Solomons. These operations, on the southeastern axis, broadened the system of Japanese support bases on the approaches to Australia.

The conduct of offensive operations simultaneously on all the strategic and operational axes atomized the enemy's efforts and did not allow it to transfer forces and to organize resistance on designated defensive lines. Holding the initiative completely, the Japanese armed forces rapidly moved forward on the axes of the main attacks.

A characteristic feature of the Japanese strategic offensive was the absence of significant intervals between sequential operations and the conduct of combat operations at high rates until operational plans drawn up in advance had been carried out completely.

With its usual speed the Japanese command massed the necessary men and equipment in the captured regions, first moving air formations into these regions and later ground forces, which, with air and naval support, continued to develop the initial success rapidly and—most important—almost without a break.

Because of the weakness of enemy resistance the Japanese command did not have to alter the direction of the main attacks, make unplanned regroupings of

men and equipment, or fundamentally revise its initial plans. All the goals of the initial operations were achieved by the Japanese as had been provided for in the operational plans; also, losses were minimal and goals were frequently achieved ahead of time.

It can thus be said that the decisive conditions for the success of the Japanese strategic offensive were the early deployment of large groupings of forces on the main axes; the surprise of attack and the high effectiveness of the first attacks; the achievement of strategic sea and air supremacy; and the close cooperation of the army and navy in conducting operations.

2. Methods of Conducting Offensive Operations

The Japanese command, in organizing and conducting a strategic offensive, used various methods of combat operations, basing its decisions on the goals of the operations, the types of enemy defenses, the geographic location of the objectives and areas planned for capture, and so forth. In addition, there were joint offensive operations by the army and navy as well as independent naval operations.

The main method of conducting joint offensive operations was based on the extensive use of amphibious assault forces (and sometimes airborne assault forces) to seize ports and beachheads on island and in maritime regions for the subsequent ground force offensive into the depth of enemy territory with active air and naval support. This method was used in the first as well as in subsequent operations during the initial period of the war. In addition, the landing of amphibious assault forces was preceded by massed Japanese air attacks against enemy air bases and airfields to win air and sea supremacy in an operation. For example, the Philippine and Malayan operations began in this manner. On 8 December 1941, simultaneously with the attack on Pearl Harbor, Japanese aviation bombed Singapore, Cavite, Hong Kong, and the airfields in the Philippine Islands and British Malaya.

The Japanese command used various operational and combat support measures in carefully preparing for the landing of amphibious assault forces. These assault forces departed from their bases and made their sea crossings secretly. The assault forces that participated in the first operations left their bases and went by sea to the designated areas before the declaration of war. The assault detachments moved under air cover and were escorted by large surface vessels. Aircraft and large surface vessels covered the landing itself.

First to land on the shore were detachments that usually consisted of marine units. The forward detachments quickly captured ports and established beachheads, after which the main forces and logistics units landed.

Aviation continuously attacked the enemy forces, suppressing their defenses against assaults and thwarting counterattacks by ground forces. Naval forces sealed off the coast, thus not allowing the enemy to bring in reinforcements by sea. One of the primary missions of the forces that had landed was to capture nearby airfields, at which army and naval aviation were later rebased. After winning complete air supremacy, Japanese aviation switched totally to supporting the ground forces.

As a rule, amphibious assault forces landed simultaneously at several points along a broad front. This broke up the efforts of the defenders, concealed the axes of the main attacks, and provided for a simultaneous offensive on several axes. During the first 2 days of the Malayan operation the Japanese landed assault forces on a front about 500 km long from Bangkok to Kota Bharu in five main areas. In the Philippine operation, on the second and third day of the war, assault forces landed at three points on the north and south of the island of Luzon. The main ground forces were landed on the 10th day of the operation at two points—Lingayen Gulf and Lamon Bay on the northwestern and eastern coast of this island.

The choice of the landing areas and of the directions of attack by the ground forces was determined by the type of enemy defenses and by the geographic features in the region of an operation. When the Malayan operation was being planned, consideration was given to the specific requirements of defending the Malacca Peninsula, and these defenses were in fact based on the defensive forces and fortifications of Singapore. The main grouping of ground forces was concentrated near Singapore, and the naval forces were based there too; in addition, the defensive works of the Singapore Fortress were designed to repel an enemy attack from the sea. The landing of Japanese forces on the Malacca Peninsula was carried out, in essense, in the undefended rear of the English. The Japanese forces began the drive on Singapore not from the sea, but from the land on two axes: along the eastern coast and along the railroad on the western coast of the peninsula. Supported by powerful air attacks, the Japanese forces advanced rapidly through the jungle at a rate of up to 25 km per day. By the end of the first month of the war the Japanese had occupied the entire Malacca Peninsula. The English forces were sealed off on the island of Singapore and surrendered. The commander and about 100,000 men (according to English data, 80,000) surrendered unconditionally to the victor.

In the Philippine operation the objective of the main attack by the Japanese forces was the island of Luzon with the capital of the Philippines, the city of Manila. The main American and Philippine forces of MacArthur's army group were concentrated on Luzon, as were several airfields and the main naval base in the Philippines at Cavite.

The main forces of the Japanese 14th Army that landed on the island of Luzon in Lingayen Gulf and Lamon Bay made two attacks from these regions along

converging axes on Manila. The American and Filipino forces were defeated in the first engagements and began to withdraw into the interior of the island.

During the 25 days of the offensive, Japanese forces almost completely captured the island, and on 2 January entered Manila. However, the Japanese command had been unable to prevent the withdrawal of part of the enemy forces to the Bataan Peninsula and to the fortress of Corregidor. Here the retreating American and Filipino forces organized a strong defense and put up stubborn resistance to the Japanese. When reserves were brought up, the Japanese forces broke this resistance and captured the peninsula. The fortress of Corregidor soon fell too.

The resistance on the Bataan Peninsula, although prolonged, did not prevent the Japanese command from capturing the islands of the archipelago and shifting the main efforts to accomplishing the next mission: the capture of islands in Indonesia.

The operations of the Japanese ground forces were characterized by fluidity, by high rates of advance to a great depth, and by close cooperation with the navy and air force. Making wide use of the great ocean expanses for maneuver, and landing assault forces on the flanks and in the rear of the enemy, Japanese forces made attacks from different directions, split the enemy defenses, advanced rapidly into the interior of enemy territory, and encircled enemy land groupings and forced them to the sea. The encircled forces were sealed off from the sea, subjected to intense bombing from the air, and forced to surrender. The aviation in the hands of the Japanese command served as the main striking force and cleared the path for the ground forces using massed air attacks.

One's attention is caught by the fact that the offensive in the island regions was carried out using sequential landings of assault forces on several operational axes. Initially the islands were captured that had airfields and naval bases, and Japanese air and naval forces were rebased there. After suppressing enemy aviation and winning air and sea supremacy, the Japanese command landed amphibious and airborne assault forces on other islands. The assault forces advanced from island to island on set axes, relying on active air and naval support. This is precisely how the offensive developed, for example, on the islands in Indonesia. After the capture of the islands of Luzon and Mindanao, units of the 5th Air Army and two fleets of shore-based naval aviation were rebased there from the island of Taiwan. Aviation and naval operations supported the landing of assault forces on the islands of Borneo, Celebes, and Amboina By the end of January 1942 (that is, in less than 2 months) the Japanese armed forces had reached the approaches to the island of Java from the east, having captured a number of the islands in the Dutch East Indies with their petroleum resources. By this time they had completely captured the Malacca Peninsula, threatening an invasion of the islands of Sumatra and Java from the west.

The sudden and rapid assault operations on the broad expanses of the archipelagos led to the isolation of separate enemy groupings on various islands and did not allow the enemy to create a stable defensive line. Air and sea supremacy ensured freedom of maneuver and a regular and rapid advance for the Japanese forces.

Even during the first—Malayan and Philippine—operations, the Japanese command was carefully preparing to conduct the subsequent Java and Burma operations, which completed the strategic offensive in the initial period.

By the start of February the Japanese armed forces had approached the islands of Sumatra and Java from three directions and had begun direct preparations for the landing of major amphibious assault forces. The strategy of the Java operation, which was very similar to the first operations in methods and forms of conducting combat operations, provided for the weakening of enemy defenses by preliminary bombing, the destruction of enemy aviation, and the defeat of enemy naval forces. After winning total air and sea supremacy, the Japanese command intended to land airborne and amphibious assault forces on a broad front, concentrating the main efforts on seizing major cities and naval bases. The operation began with the seizure of the immediate approaches to the island of Java on the north, east, and west. After landing assault forces on the southern coast of the islands of Borneo and Celebes, and after seizing the airfield and port of Palembang (the island of Sumatra) and the islands of Bali and Timor, the Japanese armed forces surrounded Java. A massed attack by carrier-based aviation on Port Darwin, and its destruction, broke the sole link between the defending forces and Australia. Using the captured airfields on the approaches to Java, Japanese aviation won complete air supremacy and carried out systematic bombing of the island. After the Japanese assault forces had seized the airfields and naval bases on the approaches to Java, the allied fleet was sealed off in the Java Sea and, somewhat later, was almost completely destroyed. Like the approaches to Java, the island itself was captured with the aid of assault forces, only in larger formations. The landing of those forces was conducted almost simultaneously at two points: in the west, near Rembang, and in the central part of the northern coast of the island, near Batavia. From the captured beachheads the Japanese forces began a rapid advance into the interior of the island and, in several days, captured all its major cities. The landing of the assault forces and the operations of the ground forces were covered by major naval forces, including the carrier strike force maneuvering in the Indian Ocean to the south of Java.

The preparations for the Burma operation began at the end of January, when combat operations in Malaya were reaching a successful conclusion. In this operation too the Japanese command resorted to its favorite methods: at the start, airfields and ports were captured on the coast of the Andaman Sea (Merguy, Tavoy, and Moulmein) so that air and naval forces could be rebased there, and then operations began to capture the territory of Burma.

Characteristic of the offensive by the Japanese forces in Burma, as in Malaya, was that it was carried out from both land and sea axes in cooperation with naval forces. The capital of Burma, Rangoon, was taken by the joint operations of amphibious assault and ground forces, which had begun an offensive from Thailand. The offensive was carried out along separate axes following rivers and scattered roads and supported from the air. The English and Chinese forces, after being defeated, retreated toward the Indian and Chinese borders and organized defenses. The Burma operation was over.

The joint offensive operations of the army and navy, such as the Philippine, Malayan, and Java operations, were carried out to seize large island and maritime territories. As for the capture of individual, comparatively small islands in the Pacific and its western part, this was achieved by naval operations alone by landing amphibious assault forces supported by naval firepower. In the event of an initial failure in a landing, as happened, for example, on Wake Island, the Japanese repeated it, using larger forces, and ultimately achieved success. After the seizure of one island the same forces were used to capture the next, and then the third, and so forth. Soon aviation and naval forces were rebased to the captured islands. Fighting in this manner, the Japanese command assumed control over the entire western Pacific.

Along with joint offensive operations by the army and navy, the Japanese command conducted independent naval operations on a quite large scale. The main goal of these operations was the destruction of major enemy naval groupings. This purpose, as well as the very character of the operations conducted solely by naval forces, to a great extent determined the methods of fighting. These methods were based on the use of carrier- and shore-based aviation and, it goes without saying, of large surface vessels and the submarine fleet.

The Hawaiian operation occupied an important place in the series of naval operations. The defeat of the main forces of the American navy at Pearl Harbor during the first hours of the war had an enormous strategic and political influence on changing the situation in Southeast Asia.

The Hawaiian operation, the depth of which was over 6,000 km, was carefully prepared by the Japanese command long before the war. It was recognized that surprise in making a powerful attack on Pearl Harbor with carrier-based aviation would be the main condition for the success of the operation. As is well known, surprise in the attack was fully achieved. Surprise was ensured by a whole set of concealment measures. It is of interest to note that the route of the carrier strike force was along northern regions of the Pacific rarely traveled by merchant vessels. For 12 days along the entire route the carriers did not encounter a single vessel. This made it possible to conceal the deployment of the Japanese navy and its approach to the Hawaiian Islands. The concealment of deployment was also aided because the ships participating in the operation observed complete radio silence, while the naval forces in the Sea of Japan and

the units of shore-based aviation near the island of Kyushu carried out false radio communications. The goal was to convince the enemy that the carrier force was still in Japanese waters.

The attack on Pearl Harbor was made at dawn by two waves of aircraft in 1 hour and 55 minutes. The 186 aircraft of the first wave (40 torpedo bombers, 51 dive bombers, 49 high-altitude bombers, and 43 fighters) attacked the battleships in the harbor and aircraft at the airfields. The ships in the harbor had not been brought to combat readiness, while the aircraft were in solid rows, wing to wing, at their airfields. The attack by the aircraft of the first wave lasted 35 minutes. Three battleships were sunk, and scores of aircraft burst into flames at the airfields. The Japanese losses from the unorganized fire of American antiaircraft artillery were just 9 aircraft.

During the air attack by the aircraft of the first wave, Japanese midget submarines tried to break through to the harbor, but energetic operations by American destroyers prevented this.

At 0900 hours the 171 aircraft of the second wave (81 dive bombers, 54 bombers, and 36 fighters) repeated the attack, which lasted 45 minutes. This attack did not come as a surprise to the Americans, and it encountered denser fire from ground and shipboard antiaircraft artillery. During the second attack the Japanese lost 20 aircraft.[2] The American military command had still not been able to discover the Japanese carriers. The American command searched for the enemy to the south, west, and east, but overlooked the northern area where the Japanese carrier strike force was; it returned to its bases without losses.

Because of the attack by Japanese aviation on Pearl Harbor four battleships were sunk and four were damaged. The U.S. Pacific Fleet had suffered an appreciable loss in other fighting and auxiliary ships. The losses in personnel were 2,403 men killed and 1,173 wounded.[3] Thus, despite the great depth of the Hawaiian operation and the time needed for the Japanese carrier formation to advance to the starting area for the attack, the Japanese command was able to ensure the secrecy of its deployment and the surprise of the first massed air attack. The main forces of the U.S. Pacific Fleet were put out of action in a short time. Japan obtained the opportunity to conduct offensive operations in the western and southwestern part of the Pacific.

The surprise attack by carrier-based aviation against the American navy at Pearl Harbor was an example of a massed use of new weapons against an unsuspecting enemy. Pearl Harbor securely established the aircraft carrier as the main naval force and moved the battleship to the background. A new phenomenon in the use of weaponry was Japan's employment of the shallow-diving torpedo with a special stabilizer. This development was also unexpected by the Americans.

The Japanese navy achieved a major success in the operation, but the command was undecided on continuing this success and attaining the final annihilation of the U.S. Pacific Fleet and the destruction of its main base.

During the first days of the war, when the Japanese command had only just begun the Malayan operation, the Japanese naval forces succeeded in inflicting major damage on the English navy, having destroyed the nucleus of its Eastern Squadron. A specific feature of the operations by the Japanese naval forces against this squadron was that the squadron suffered heavy losses from an attack by shore-based naval aviation at a time when the ships, moving at sea, were in full combat readiness. This happened as follows. To fight the Japanese assault forces, the English command had sent out of Singapore two of its battleships, the *Prince of Wales* and the *Repulse*. These were detected by Japanese reconnaissance aircraft and submarines deployed along the coast of British Malaya. The Japanese command sent out a formation of two battleships, three cruisers, and several destroyers to intercept the English battleships. On the morning of the following day 88 bombers and torpedo bombers from shore-based naval aviation were sent out from airfields in Indochina to attack the English squadron. The English ships, because of their great distance from English airfields and because of the shortage of fighter aviation, did not have air cover. In 1 hour and 18 minutes both battleships were sunk by the powerful attack of Japanese aviation. This was the first time that enemy aviation alone caused the loss of major surface vessels operating at sea in full combat readiness. The loss showed that such vessels could not survive against massed air attacks without air cover. The destruction of the two battleships—the nucleus of the English Eastern Squadron—ensured the successful landing of Japanese forces on the Malacca Peninsula and their further advance along the seacoast.

This catastrophe noticeably reduced the morale of the English forces defending Malaya. The English were deprived of the possibility of opposing the Japanese navy with sufficient forces at sea. This put the ground forces in a difficult situation. In truth, the English command reinforced its fleet in the Indian Ocean. However, this did not have a substantial influence on the course of the Malayan operation.

In the second stage of the strategic offensive, when the Java operation was under way, Japanese naval forces won a stunning victory over the combined allied squadron in the Java Sea. Characteristic of the operations of the Japanese naval forces against this squadron was that surface vessels played the decisive role in achieving victory.

The success of the operations by the Japanese navy in the Java Sea was largely explained by the navy's ability to seal off the squadron in this basin ahead of time. By the time of the decisive clash of the Japanese ships with the combined allied squadron, all the exits from the Java Sea into the Indian Ocean and the seas touching Australia were in the hands of the Japanese command.

The Dutch admiral Doorman, to whom at this critical moment the allies gave the command of the combined squadron, made the decision to attack the Japanese assault detachments and thwart the landing on the island of Java. On 27–28 February there was a naval battle between the allied squadron and the ships of the eastern operations group of the Japanese navy. The allies suffered heavy losses. Most of the enemy cruisers and destroyers were sunk or damaged by the guns and torpedoes of the Japanese ships. The surviving allied vessels tried to break out of the Java Sea, but virtually all were destroyed. Only four American destroyers, which reached Australian ports, were able to avoid destruction.

A month after the capture of Java, during the Burma operation, the Japanese command undertook a major independent naval operation in the Indian Ocean. Its main goal was the defeat of the English Eastern Fleet, based at the island of Ceylon, and the thwarting of enemy sea shipments in the Bay of Bengal. This operation also achieved another goal by supporting the landing of amphibious assault forces on the coast of Burma. Thus, a whole series of operational missions was carried out in the naval operation in the Indian Ocean. A characteristic of the operation was that all branches of the navy participated in it. The main strike force in the defeat of the English Eastern Fleet was the carrier strike force that had participated in the first stage of the strategic offensive in the attack on Pearl Harbor. The thwarting of sea shipments in the Bay of Bengal was carried out by a large detachment of Japanese vessels operating in the Andaman Sea. Japanese submarines also took part in the operation.

The methods of conducting combat operations in this naval operation were based on the use of carrier-based aviation to make massed attacks against naval bases and the naval forces at sea.

The first powerful attack, with 180 aircraft, was made against Colombo (Ceylon). Because of this attack, base and airfield installations were destroyed, and the transports and auxiliary vessels in the port were sunk. However, the Japanese command was unable to catch the fighting ships of the English navy at the base; they had been sent out to sea ahead of time and partially rebased at Addu in the Maldive Islands, which was unknown to the Japanese. Somewhat later, to the east of the Maldive Islands, Japanese carrier-based aviation detected two enemy heavy cruisers, which were destroyed in a repeated attack by 80 aircraft. Four days after the attack on Colombo, the carrier formation attacked a second English naval base on Ceylon, at Trincomalee. Docks, shops, and airfields were destroyed. To the east of Trincomalee, the carrier *Hermes* was detected with its destroyer escort. On the same day, another group of aircraft attacked these ships and destroyed them.

After destroying the naval bases and sinking all the enemy ships that had been detected at sea, the carrier strike force returned to Japan.

The English suffered considerable losses in the Indian Ocean because of the operation of the Japanese navy. This forced the English commander Somerville to withdraw the remaining forces to bases on the east coast of Africa. The eastern part of the Indian Ocean was abandoned to the total supremacy of the Japanese navy. A Japanese invasion of India seemed inevitable.[4]

A detachment of ships operating on the lines of communications in the Bay of Bengal, not encountering opposition, caused great damage to English shipping in this region. In April, in just 9 days, surface ships, aviation, and submarines destroyed transports displacing over 135,000 tons.[5]

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The initial operations in the Pacific showed that the combat operations to win sea supremacy assumed enormous scale and constituted the main element in naval operational-strategic activity. Naval and, above all, carrier-based aviation played the leading role in winning sea supremacy. The increased capabilities of aviation made it possible to make effective attacks against naval forces not only at sea but in port. The destruction of naval bases and airfields greatly reduced the operational zone of an enemy fleet and made the use of its forces much more difficult. Attacks against bases and airfields became one of the main methods of conducting operations to destroy naval forces and win sea supremacy.

The initial operations in the Pacific repudiated the view of the battleship as the backbone of the navy and brought the aircraft carrier to prominence. The carriers represented the class of ships that could move aircraft over great expanses and bring them close to targets of attack. Aircraft carriers could create air supremacy in areas thousands of miles distant from one's own shores. In the war at sea the Japanese appreciated the role of aviation and aircraft carriers sooner than their opponents, and they used these weapons effectively.

Submarines were also used for fighting against large surface vessels. However, their attacks against fast and well-defended combat ships were not very effective, and the submarines themselves suffered heavy losses. In the initial period of the war, despite having almost all submarines on station, only one submarine succeeded in putting an American naval vessel, the aircraft carrier *Saratoga*, out of action.

In the initial operations the Japanese navy's surface ships had as their main mission the support of landing operations. Almost all the clashes between surface forces of the opposing sides occurred in performing this mission. The surface ships' main method of operations was to engage in artillery exchanges and torpedo attacks both day and night.

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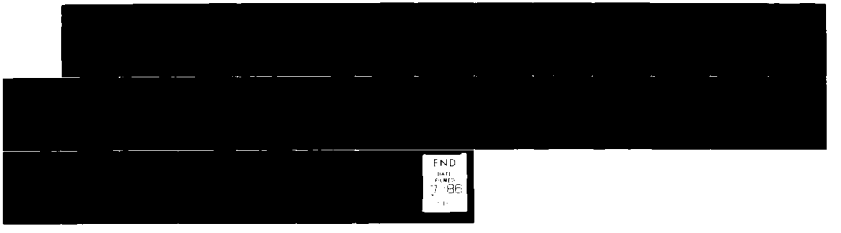

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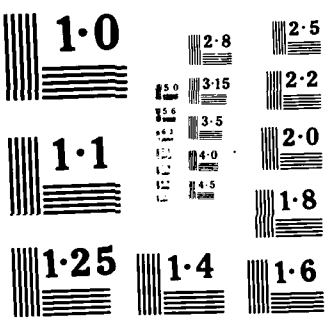
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The first operations showed the increased importance of organizing cooperation between different forces.

The naval operations conducted during the initial period of the war included all branches of the navy: aviation, surface vessels, and submarines. The Japanese command strove so that each branch, in carrying out its specific functions with maximum efficiency, thus complemented the operations of the other branches, while all the branches, in fighting as an integrated unit, achieved great results through their joint efforts.

The Japanese navy's operations to disrupt the enemy's sea lines of communications were comparatively limited. In planning a blitzkrieg war, the Japanese command devoted its main attention to its assault operations and to destroying enemy naval forces. It was felt that a rapid victory would eliminate the need to fight an extended battle against enemy shipping. For operations on the lines of communications in the Pacific, the Japanese command episodically used small submarine forces. This made it possible for the Americans to carry out massive transfers from America to Australia and the Pacific islands.

At the same time, in conducting joint offensive operations, the Japanese command devoted a good deal of attention to thwarting the enemy's operational transfers, isolating enemy ground groupings from the sea. Surface vessels and shore-based naval aviation were the main force in accomplishing this mission. For example, in the Java operation, the Japanese navy defeated a large convoy traveling from Australia with reinforcements for the allied forces on Java; and in the Bay of Bengal during the Burma operation the actions of a large detachment of surface ships that included a light carrier in essence completely broke English communications between India and Burma.

The chief condition for the Japanese navy's successful operations on the sea lines of communications was its sea supremacy.

3. Allied Defensive Operations

One of the main reasons for the collapse of the strategic defense of the U.S. and its allies in the Far Eastern theaters of operations was the miscalculation of the English and American military and political leadership in assessing the direction of Japanese aggression and the possible times for its start. That Japan first attacked the U.S. and England, not the USSR, as well as the time of the attack—all of this was unexpected by the western political and military leaders. A direct consequence of the miscalculations was the incompleteness of the planned defensive measures and of the preparation of the allied armed forces for war, as well as the considerable delay in their strategic deployment. While Japan was able to fully mobilize and build up its forces for the offensive, the U.S. and England carried out only some of the measures planned to defend their Pacific possessions.

The defense of the Philippines held an important place in the operational-strategic plans of the U.S.; however, the organization of these defenses was not to be completed until February 1942. The transfer of American forces to the Philippines and the organization of 10 divisions of the Filipino army were not completed by the start of the war. The strength of MacArthur's army group was about 137,000 men, instead of the 200,000 called for in the plan,[6] and the troops were poorly trained for combat. The defensive works on most of the islands were under construction. Only on the island of Luzon had Bataan been fortified and the defensive works at the fortress of Corregidor at the entrance to Manila Bay strengthened. The transfer of B-17 bombers, on which the American command placed great hopes, and of fighter aviation was being carried out slowly. Air defenses on the islands were extremely weak, and there was an acute shortage of radar equipment.

In England's operational-strategic plans great attention was devoted to defending the Malacca Peninsula, but these defenses were organized, as already noted, chiefly around Singapore. However, even here the defenses were weak precisely at the point where the attack of the advancing Japanese forces was made (from the north). The allied forces defending the peninsula had a quite mixed national composition and were far from uniform in the level of combat skills. Some 55 percent of the allied forces were local formations—Indian and Malayan units whose weapons were obsolete—and the level of combat training was low. The extremely important northern axis was covered by Malayan units. The detachments of English forces here, which were more combat-capable than the local formations, were few in number. The Dutch forces, whose combat capability was also comparatively high, performed only security functions as part of garrisons in the large cities.

The allied air forces had old-model aircraft that were greatly inferior in quality to Japanese aviation. The system of airfields and naval bases had weak air defenses.

In the fight against Japanese aggression the main hopes were placed on a strong navy. With some superiority in battleships, the allies, however, were well behind the enemy in the number of aircraft carriers.

In 1941, after the completion of the summer exercises, to increase the naval power of the U.S. in the Far East, by a presidential decision, the Pacific Fleet was left at the forward naval base in the Hawaiian Islands, Pearl Harbor. The English command also strengthened its naval forces in the Far East. After long vacillation it sent to Singapore two major ships: the battleship *Prince of Wales* and the heavy cruiser *Repulse*. But they arrived just 5 days before the start of the war; by this time the English command had been unable to put into effect measures to support the operations of these ships and, in particular, to organize their air defense.

The absence of a unified command in the theater greatly impeded the pooling of efforts by the allies. Despite the provisions for coordinated operations by the armed forces, the allies did not have a unified command body. Only toward the end of November 1941 did the U.S. war department propose to General MacArthur that preliminary talks be undertaken with representatives of the army and navy—and later with the English and the Dutch—on creating such a body.

The U.S., English, and Dutch armed forces were scattered over enormous expanses and were difficult to control. They were not combat-capable enough to conduct the strategic defense called for in the war plan. The allied military command underestimated the enemy's ability to conduct a broad offensive simultaneously on all strategic and operational axes and did not look at the operations in the west, which had begun with powerful air attacks. All of this foreordained the severe defeats that the U.S. and England suffered with the start of the war in the Pacific.

The conduct of the strategic defense by the allied armed forces, and, in particular, by the American army and navy, was sharply complicated because they entered the war with a low level of overall combat readiness and with poorly organized intelligence on all levels. As a consequence, the American command overlooked the deployment of the enemy armed forces in the theater of operations and the enemy's occupation of the starting areas for the offensive. The American command was then unable to organize its forces to repel the first air attacks.

The low combat readiness of the U.S. Pacific Fleet based at the Hawaiian Islands is seen from the concentration, at the time of the Japanese air attack, of virtually all its forces in the harbor. In addition, the ships—it would not be extraneous to note this again—were moored side by side at the same pier. Only two ships in the fleet had been brought to combat readiness and were on patrol duty on the approaches to Pearl Harbor.

Nor was American aviation ready to repel the Japanese attack. At the time, its aircraft stood in solid rows on their airfields and served as a target for the Japanese air force.

The air defense units on the Hawaiian Islands were not standing duty that would have met the requirements of constant combat readiness. Thus, there was no radar surveillance during the morning and afternoon hours.

Although the American command on the Hawaiian Islands did have information on a possible enemy attack, air reconnaissance to the north of the island of Oahu, in the direction chosen by the enemy as the main one for the attack, was not provided. Even when unidentified submarines appeared in a protected zone, this did not put the American command on guard. The commander,

Admiral Kimmel, limited himself to merely sending a destroyer into this zone, and the combat readiness of the fleet was not raised.

It is not surprising that the attack against Pearl Harbor by Japanese carrier-based aviation was completely unexpected by the American command.

One of the consequences of the catastrophe that struck the U.S. Pacific Fleet was that it lost the capability to seriously oppose the Japanese advance against the Philippines and Indonesia.

Because of the weather the attack by Japanese aviation on the Philippine Islands was carried out during the daytime, when the American command had already received word of the attack on Pearl Harbor. However, there was no organization to repel the attack on the Philippines either. The American aircraft were simply unable to take off; one-half of the modern heavy bombers and more than one-third of the fighters were destroyed on the ground. The remaining aircraft were moved south.

At this time a large part of the U.S. Asiatic Fleet was in the south and avoided destruction. The submarines and patrol craft were spread over the islands of the archipelago and did not suffer losses. However, the absence of air cover forced them to withdraw to the south as well. The command of the U.S. Asiatic Fleet, deprived of the support of its aviation, decided not to use the fleet to resist the landing of Japanese assault forces. Submarines employed for this purpose did not produce any results.

Thus, American air and naval forces did not participate in defending the Philippine Islands and left the ground forces without cover and support.

After suffering losses from the Japanese air attacks, the American and Filipino forces began an unorganized retreat. Command and control was lost. Only on the Bataan Peninsula was the American command able to organize a stable defense, which lasted several months. However, the forces sealed off on the peninsula could not have any substantial influence on the development of the Japanese strategic offensive. By the end of December it had become clear that the American armed forces had no possibility of resisting the seizure of the Philippines and the advance of the Japanese to the Dutch East Indies. On 30 December Admiral King issued orders to the new commander of the Pacific Fleet, Admiral Nimitz, to focus efforts on holding the line of the Aleutian Islands, the islands of Midway, Samoa, and New Caledonia, and Port Moresby on the island of New Guinea. Troops were moved to these areas, bases were created, and army and navy forces were built up.

The English command, in contrast to the American, was able to detect the deployment of Japanese assault forces departing from ports in Indochina. After

organizing air reconnaissance of the Japanese convoys at sea, the English command brought its armed forces in British Malaya to a state of combat readiness. Nevertheless, the English command was unable to organize a sufficiently strong resistance to the enemy at sea, in the air, and on the ground. On 8 December English aviation lost more than one-half of its aircraft in attacks by the Japanese air force.

The destruction of the two battleships of the English Eastern Squadron, the *Prince of Wales* and the *Repulse*, meant that the navy, soon after the air force, also suffered a defeat during the first days of the war. The English were powerless to thwart the landing of enemy assault forces and were unable to provide support for the defending ground forces.

The English command tried to organize defenses in the central part of Malaya and to prevent the advance of the enemy into the south of the country. However, the poorly trained forces suffered one defeat after another and were pushed back to Singapore under the Japanese attacks. Sealed off by sea and by land on the island of Singapore, the demoralized English and Malayan units surrendered before exhausting their abilities to resist.

As combat operations developed, the allies hurriedly created a joint command headed by General Wavell, whose staff was in Surabaja (the island of Java). However, the narrowly "national" approach to fighting, the differences in the organization of the armed forces and in the documentation system of each country, and the rapidly changing situation caused enormous difficulties in coordinating military efforts. In fact, each national command continued to keep control over its armed forces, striving to use them primarily in its own interests. This made it much more difficult to join forces to conduct a strategic defense.

The loss of Singapore by the English and the advance of the Japanese to the approaches to Java created a critical situation. Under these conditions the leadership of combat operations was turned over to the Dutch command, which made a last attempt to defend the island of Java. The combined allied squadron sent to attack the Japanese ships moving toward Java with assault units on board was defeated in a naval battle. On the island of Java the allied ground forces did not put up serious resistance to the offensive of the Japanese assault forces coming ashore.

The allied armed forces in Malaya, the Philippines, and the Dutch East Indies were thus defeated in a short time.

Attempts by English and Chinese forces to halt the advance of the enemy into Burma were also unsuccessful. After being defeated at Rangoon and Kalewa, the English forces abandoned Burma and hurried to set up a defense on India's borders.

The Anglo–American command's attempt to use defensive operations to hold strategic positions in Malaya and to defend colonial possessions in Southeast Asia was unsuccessful. The English Fleet, fearing a total defeat, was moved to ports on the east coast of Africa, leaving India unprotected from the sea. The American command concentrated a large grouping of ground forces in Australia, built up its naval forces in the southwestern and central Pacific, and created a network of naval and air bases to block Japan's further advance toward American and Australian shores.

Thus ended the initial period of the war for the allies in the Pacific.

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Operations during the initial period had a tremendous influence on the war in the Pacific and in Southeast Asia. Japan achieved major successes in these operations: it defeated the allied armed forces and captured huge territories with extremely rich natural resources and a population of more than 150 million.

The initial period of the war in the Pacific convincingly showed that, at the start of the war, military operations in naval theaters of operations, just as in land theaters, had changed greatly. The war began immediately with the conduct of major strategic operations in which all branches of the armed forces participated. The most important role was played by naval forces. The main forces of the adversaries were drawn into the operations. The Japanese managed to complete the strategic deployment of their armed forces in advance, to the point of occupying starting areas for the offensive.

Strategic offensive operations by the Japanese armed forces constituted a system of joint army and naval operations and of independent naval and ground force operations linked by a common goal and by a unified plan. All of these operations pursued decisive goals—the defeat of opposing groups of enemy armed forces and the capture of major island and maritime territories.

Winning air and sea supremacy was one of the main conditions for a successful strategic offensive by Japanese forces in the ocean theater. This was achieved by destroying enemy air and naval forces.

The main content of the operational-strategic activity of the Japanese navy consisted in conducting independent naval operations to destroy enemy naval forces and to win sea supremacy. Carrier-based and land-based naval aviation was the main force in the struggle for sea supremacy.

Contrary to the prewar views of many bourgeois military theorists who rejected the possibility of using large naval assault forces in combat, assault operations in the Pacific were the main method of conducting the offensive in the maritime and island regions of the theater of operations.

Because of serious flaws in its organization the allied strategic defense was not able to restrain the enemy's advance for any length of time. Surface ship operations, deprived of air support, proved to be of little effect. Operations by ground forces, organized for the same purpose, were also unsuccessful. As a rule, these forces were late in concentrating near the landing areas and were not in condition to offer serious resistance to the enemy.

The defensive operations of allied forces, scattered over vast expanses, were conducted in centers of resistance and, as a rule, ended in hasty retreat.

That a joint allied command for the coalition's armed forces was not created in advance was a serious obstacle in the organization of defensive engagements.

The American armed forces, together with their allies, required nearly 3 years of intense military operations to eliminate the consequences of the unsuccessful initial operations. The U.S. government was forced to mobilize all of the country's massive military and economic potential to meet war needs. It became possible to force Japan to surrender, however, only after the Soviet Union entered the war and defeated the Kwantung Army, the main force of the Japanese militarists.

Notes

1. See *Kampanii voyny na Tikhom okeane* [Campaigns of the War in the Pacific] (Moscow: Voyenizdat, 1956), p. 41. [Hereafter cited as *Pacific Campaigns*—U.S. Ed.]
2. Ibid., pp. 23-25.
3. See Butler and Gwyer, p. 231.
4. See Roskill, II, 35-36.
5. See C. Nimitz and E. Potter, *Voyna na more (1939-1945)* [The War at Sea (1939-1945)] (Moscow: Voyenizdat, 1965), p. 264.
6. See Matloff and Snell, p. 94.

Chapter 14. Winning Air Supremacy and Organizing National Air Defense at the Start of the War

The problem of winning and maintaining air supremacy occupied a central position among the many problems of strategy and operational art throughout the last war. This was especially so during the initial period. The course and outcome of strategic operations in the land and naval theaters depended directly on how this problem was solved by the belligerents.

Aviation's great maneuverability and its capacity to rapidly penetrate enemy airspace and effectively attack various targets on the battlefield and in the deep rear forced the belligerents to take measures to protect their armed forces, people, and industrial enterprises and communications against air attacks. Such measures gradually led to the organization and development of complex national air defense systems, which became a factor of operational and strategic importance. Problems of organizing and conducting air defense were especially acute at the start of the war.

1. Air Force Combat Operations to Win Air Supremacy

The various services and branches of the armed forces—the air, ground, naval, air defense, and airborne forces—took an active part in the combat operations to win air supremacy at the start of the war. However, in initially weakening enemy aviation groupings and in winning air supremacy the main role belonged to the air forces in conducting combat operations in the land theaters and to the naval forces—primarily to carrier-based aviation—in conducting combat operations in distant naval theaters.

The aggressor nations of fascist Germany and imperialist Japan succeeded in successfully solving the problem of winning air supremacy in the first operations. There was much in common in the methods used by both nations to do this. Thus, during fascist Germany's attack on Poland and then on France, and during imperialist Japan's attack on the U.S. and its allies, the main method used to defeat opposing aviation groupings was surprise massed air attacks against permanent enemy air bases. Facist Germany used this method in combination with a rapid advance by its ground forces, while militarist Japan combined it with operations by its naval forces.

Fascist German air force methods to win air supremacy in the initial campaigns in Europe. Surprise massed air attacks against enemy air force bases and the rapid advance of tank and mechanized formations into enemy airfield regions were first used by the Hitlerite leadership to win air supremacy in the Polish campaign. With the start of the war the German 1st and 4th air forces subjected the airfields of the Polish air force to massed attacks. These attacks were repeated, so that during the first 2 days of the war the main Polish air forces were crushed. At the same time, fuel and ammunition dumps, command posts, communications centers, and certain aircraft plants in Poland came under attack by the fascist German air force.

The rebasing of Polish aviation started very late and was carried out under continuous enemy actions. Besides, the process of rebasing was drawn out and, in essence, took place continuously during the entire campaign. This was linked with the rapid advance of the fascist German forces into the interior of Polish territory and the regions where Polish aviation was based. Polish aviation units were forced almost constantly to move to other airfields. The situation of the Polish air force deteriorated with each passing day. It became critical when, during rebasing, the Polish command lost control of its aviation. This circumstance led to a decline in the activity of the Polish air force, although the nation still had a considerable number of combat aircraft.

Individual units of the Polish air force, particularly of fighter aviation, repeatedly made retaliatory attacks against the enemy on land and in the air. But these operations were scattered and, with the inequality of forces that existed in the air, ended, as a rule, with major new losses for the Polish air force.

The fascist German air force won air supremacy in 2 days and held it until the end of the entire campaign against Poland. Rapid offensive operations by fascist German mobile formations and their capture of airfields, aircraft, supplies, and aircraft plants steadily reduced the base for replenishing the Polish air losses and minimized opportunities for manuevering even limited forces. In several days the Polish command was virtually deprived of its aviation, and the final stage of the war was carried out with complete air supremacy in the hands of the fascist German air force.

The same method of winning air supremacy—surprise massed air attacks against airfields in combination with rapid offensive operations by the ground forces—was used by the Hitlerite command at the start of the war against France, Belgium, and the Netherlands.

To neutralize the French air force the Nazi military leadership employed over 3,000 combat aircraft. On 10 May 1940, the first day of the war, these aircraft simultaneously attacked 72 airfields in Belgium, the Netherlands, and northern France. Several hundred aircraft were destroyed at once.[1] After this, some of the airfields in the Netherlands and Belgium were captured by airborne forces.

The success of this operation owed much to careful reconnaissance of the French airfield network and air defense system during the 8 months of the "phony war."

On 11 May, the second day of military operations, because of new attacks against the French airfields, another 400 aircraft were destroyed, and on 12 May, about 200 more.[2] On the following days, because of the rebasing of a number of French air force units into the country's interior, the effectiveness of fascist German air attacks against the airfields declined sharply. At the same time, the fascist German air force made several attacks against enemy aircraft plants and seriously disorganized production. On 3 June fascist air forces, having detected the new deployment areas of the French air grouping, resumed attacks on the airfields. On that day French losses on the ground were over 500 aircraft, on 4 June they were 200 to 250, and on 5 June, over 140 aircraft.[3]

In France, as in Poland, control was lost over aviation units during their transfer. Meanwhile, the fascist German ground forces advanced rapidly, capturing aviation basing areas and any remaining aircraft. All of this led to a situation where French aviation quickly lost its combat capability and was essentially put out of action as a real force. The hope of help from the English air force was an illusion, since England, France's ally, feared attacks by fascist German aviation and kept all its available air forces on the British Isles and used them in its own interests. This was one of the reasons that the fascist German air force had total air supremacy and maintained it right up to the moment of France's surrender.

Thus, the German–Polish war and the invasion of Hitlerite forces into France showed that in both campaigns the main method of winning air supremacy was with massed air attacks by the aggressor's air force against permanent airfields. These attacks were supplemented by offensive operations by the ground forces and by airdrops of assault forces. Aerial combat to neutralize enemy air power during these campaigns was of secondary importance.

The combat operations of the belligerents' air forces in winning air supremacy at the start of the Great Patriotic War. During Germany's attack on the Soviet Union the employment of the fascist German air force differed little from its use in the campaigns against Poland, Belgium, the Netherlands, and France. Here, as well, the initial action by the fascist German air force was surprise massed attacks against our airfields to deal a decisive defeat to Soviet aviation while it was still on the ground and to keep it from taking part in combat operations. However, on the Soviet-German Front, fascist German aviation did not fully achieve this goal.

On the first day of the war against the USSR the fascist German air force attacked most of the airfields in the border area. Around 65 percent of the airfields of the four border districts were subject to simultaneous air attack by fascist

German aviation. Around 1,200 Soviet aircraft were destroyed on the ground and in the air.[4]

Enemy aviation caused serious losses to the air forces of the Western Military District. This was due to the clustered positioning of the district's air units and formations and their low combat readiness. In the other border military districts, where the command had dispersed the air units over temporary airfields before the enemy attack, aircraft losses on the ground were much fewer. For example, the total air force losses of the Baltic Special Military District did not exceed 9 percent of the initial strength; for the Kiev Special Military District the figure was 14 percent.[5]

The fewest losses of all, around 3 percent, were in the Odessa Military District.[6] The aviation there was brought to full combat readiness ahead of time and was dispersed over temporary airfields. Most of the enemy air attacks were successfully repelled or were carried out against airfields where our aircraft were no longer located. For a long time enemy reconnaissance was unable to establish the new deployment regions for the air force in the Odessa Military District.

The second day of the war brought a sharp decline in our aviation losses from enemy air attacks. This was because of a number of immediate defensive measures taken by the command of the districts (or fronts). The main measures included the dispersal of aviation over temporary airfields; an increase in the combat readiness of units and formations; an improvement in observation, warning, and communications; and a strengthening of the air defenses for new air force deployment areas. On 23 June the losses of the air units of the same Western Front were 1/12 of the losses on the first day of the war.[7]

Despite considerable losses, Soviet aviation during the most difficult first 2 or 3 weeks of the war kept the capacity for active combat operations. This was eloquently shown by the losses of fascist German aviation. From 22 June through 19 July they amounted to 1,284 aircraft.[8]

During the first days of the war an essential difference was disclosed in the methods of employing German and Soviet aviation in combat. While the fascist German air force concentrated its main attention on neutralizing our aviation predominantly on the ground, the Soviet Air Force focused its efforts chiefly on destroying enemy aircraft in aerial combat. Of the 1,200 aircraft lost by the air force of our active fronts on 22 June, 800 were destroyed at their airfields.[9] During this same period, of the 822 aircraft lost by the Hitlerite air force on the Soviet-German Front, 613 were shot down in aerial combat.[10] The extremely difficult situation that developed at the start of the war on the major axes forced the Soviet command to use its main aviation forces to support the ground forces. Aviation forces conducted reconnaissance, obtaining valuable information for the troops; provided air cover for assault groupings; repelled enemy air attacks

against friendly forces and objectives in the rear; took an active part in supporting counterattacks by our forces; and bombed advancing enemy units and formations, particularly enemy motorized and tank columns. And our air force did all of this while overcoming extremely fierce resistance by enemy aviation. In the ground forces' operations area—over the battlefield and in the immediate operational depth—fierce aerial combat took place almost continuously. There were few forces left to neutralize Hitlerite aviation at its airfields.

However, this does not mean that the Soviet Air Force did not make attacks against fascist German air bases. On 25 June the air units of the Northern Fronts and of the Red Banner Baltic and Northern fleets undertook an attack against enemy airfields in the south of Finland and on the Karelian Isthmus. It was a surprise for the enemy. About 30 enemy aircraft were destroyed at the airfields.[11]

Attacks by the Soviet Air Force against enemy airfields were organized by the command on a number of fronts. On 3 July, by a directive of the chief of the General Staff, the commanders of the Northwestern, Western, and Southwestern fronts and the commander of the Red Army Air Force were given the mission of making a surprise massed attack against enemy aviation simultaneously at 31 airfields. However, the weather at the time did not provide an opportunity to fully carry out this plan. The attack was made only against certain airfields in the enemy rear area in front of the zone of operations of the Western Front.

But on 8 July, 28 enemy airfields underwent air attacks. Counting the operations by long-range bomber aviation, 42 airfields came under attack by our air force; 40 to 50 aircraft were destroyed or damaged at these airfields.[12]

The Soviet Air Force, gradually becoming more active, more and more frequently attacked the enemy in the air and on the ground.

The Soviet command's immediate decisive measures to protect aviation against enemy attacks at its bases, as well as our air force's increased activity, led to a situation where from about 20 July aerial combat became the main method for seizing and maintaining air supremacy. The rise in the intensity of aerial encounters demonstrated that the fascist German air force, despite the advantage of surprise attack, had not been able to fully carry out its chief mission: to win air supremacy and to maintain it just as firmly as it had been able to in the first military campaigns.

Japanese air force methods to win air supremacy in the initial period of the war in the Pacific. Like fascist Germany, Japan began to carry out its strategic plans in the Pacific by seizing air supremacy. And like the Hitlerite leadership, the Japanese command selected surprise massed attacks against permanent airfields as the main method to defeat enemy air power. A specific feature of the Japanese method of winning air supremacy was that these attacks were

made by naval forces, or to put it more accurately, by the carrier fleet. In the operational plan for conducting the war the missions of the Japanese air forces were formulated in the following manner: "Working in close cooperation, the air forces of the army and navy are to make air attacks against the American, English, and Dutch air bases in the combat operations area of the ground and air forces.... The air forces are to begin combat operations at dawn with a surprise attack on the main allied air bases."[13]

As was outlined in the operations plan, during the first days of the war Japanese aviation made a series of surprise massed attacks against enemy airfields on all decisive axes. As a result, the American air force lost about 200 aircraft in the Hawaiian Islands[14] and one-half of its heavy bombers and more than one-third of its fighters in the Philippines.[15]

The English air force suffered an equally serious loss from the first Japanese air attacks. On 8 December Japanese aviation destroyed 60 of the 110 English combat aircraft at airfields in the northern part of Malaya.[16]

The surprise massed attacks against airfields during the first days of the war made it possible for Japanese aviation to seize air supremacy in the Pacific. This was one of the most important conditions for the successful development of operations by the Japanese armed forces.

Thus, a general conclusion can be drawn that the aggressor nations were able to seize air supremacy in a short time. **A primary factor in determining the successful completion of this important mission was the reliable information on the basing of enemy air forces and on the location of the aircraft at the airfields.** This information was available to both the fascist German and Japanese command because of carefully organized preliminary reconnaissance conducted by aircraft, intelligence agents, and so forth. At the same time, it could be noted that the nations threatened with aggression did not take sufficiently effective measures to actively oppose an aggressor's intelligence measures. Even after the defeat of Poland, for example, in France the systematic reconnaissance flights by fascist German aviation over French territory were clearly underestimated, and the operations of intelligence agents were not stopped decisively.

The aggressor nations were able to learn in great detail about the airfield network and effective combat strength of Polish, French, and American aviation and to determine the airfield air defense system, the flight schedules of units and formations, as well as the position, number, and condition of aircraft.

Reliable intelligence data combined with extensive deception of the enemies made it possible for both the German and the Japanese air forces to make the first attacks against the enemy airfields without additional reconnaissance. This was one of the most important conditions for achieving a surprise attack.

The second most important factor that secured air supremacy for fascist Germany and imperialist Japan was the aggressors' massed use of major forces in the first attacks to defeat the most important enemy air groupings discovered by reconnaissance.

In the attack on Poland, in the first attack against enemy airfields the Hitlerite command used 700 of the 2,000 aircraft assigned for supporting the invasion of this country. With the start of the war against France, around 1,700 aircraft, out of a total of 3,000, took part in attacks against enemy airfields.[17] For the attack on the Soviet Union, fascist Germany employed around 5,000 combat aircraft, of which more than half were assigned for winning air supremacy.[18] Of the 10 aircraft carriers that Japan had, 6 were used during the attack against Pearl Harbor.[19]

It is important to note that the enemy, possessing reliable data on the basing of the opposing air forces, made the first massed attacks against airfields where the newest aircraft were. In doing so, the enemy achieved not only quantitative but also qualitative superiority over the aviation of the defending side.

The third factor that allowed the aggressor to rapidly seize air supremacy was the successful choice of the time for an air attack, and precisely the choice of the moment when the combat readiness of enemy air units and formations was usually low. The aggressor most often invaded enemy airspace at dawn, when personnel were at rest in garrisons that were, as a rule, far from the airfields. Even when the garrisons were promptly notified of the danger of an enemy air attack, a certain amount of time was required to sound the alert and to assemble personnel and get them to their aircraft. Taking this into consideration, the attackers struck airfields, troop positions, staffs, and communications centers at the same time.

The fourth factor giving the aggressor great superiority in conducting combat operations to win air supremacy was the high rate of advance of tank and motorized formations. Making use of the results of air force operations, these formations quickly broke through into the enemy's operational depth and, as they moved ahead, captured or threatened to capture many airfields. The aviation was forced to rebase to new areas, without conducting active combat operations. During this period, as already noted, control over air units was lost. Thus, the rapid advance by mobile formations helped to win and, more important, to maintain air supremacy.

These four factors created an exceptionally favorable situation for the attacker who had the opportunity to commit its main forces to battle immediately and to achieve major strategic results at the start of the war. By winning air supremacy aviation contributed substantially to the operations of ground and naval forces, and they, in turn, provided decisive help in maintaining this supremacy for a more or less extended time.

2. National Air Defense

Air Defense Capabilities in Repelling Mass Air Attacks

The development and continuous improvement in air defenses took place because of scientific and technical progress in military affairs. This happened in such a way that there was continuous competition between the means of attack (aircraft) and the means of defense against them (air defense equipment), and the means of attack remained superior. The superiority of the means of attack was explained because improvements in air defenses began, as a rule, after major advances in the development of aircraft construction, so that it was extremely difficult to achieve a balance between the means of attack and the means of defense. The lack of balance also determined in advance the inequality in the various nations' abilities to use their air forces and air defense weapons in combat at the start of the war. This was seen in the usual lack of conformity, by the start of the war, of the rate and scope of air defense measures to the level of air force development.

In truth, as soon as combat operations started, all the belligerents hurriedly took measures to strengthen their air defenses. They increased the production of antiaircraft weapons, fighter aircraft, and air observation, warning, and communications equipment, and they improved the organizational structure of their air defense systems. But the fact remains that by the start of the war they had insufficient air defense forces and equipment to safely cover their territories and troop groupings.

In addition, air defense capabilities were limited by the primitive state and poor equipment of the air observation, warning, and communications forces. Dependent on visual spotting posts and wire communications, these forces were unable to rapidly raise the alarm at the appearance of airborne targets. This led to a delay in readying air defenses to repel massed enemy air attacks.

Consideration also had to be taken that ground air defense forces and weapons (antiaircraft guns, searchlights, and so forth), in being tied to the defense of certain objectives and in having low mobility, were able to engage enemy aviation only when nearby or directly overhead. Fighter aircraft alone were highly maneuverable and could intercept enemy bombers at the distant approaches to a defended objective. But fighter aircraft were able to do this only when enemy aircraft were detected relatively soon before their appearance over an objective, and this was beyond the capacity of the air observation, warning, and communications forces. Putting to use the maneuverability of fighter aircraft thus came up against the primitive state of the air observation, warning, and communications forces. In truth, even before the war, some countries' air defense systems began to receive radar equipment that greatly improved the equipment of these forces. But, at the start of the war, there was still too little of this equipment, and it could not yet fundamentally transform the air observation, warning, and communications forces.

Fighter aviation was able to detect enemy aircraft ahead of time in another way: by patrolling probable flight routes of enemy aircraft. However, this required an excessive number of aircraft sorties and, in addition, did not dependably guarantee detection of enemy aircraft at the needed time.

Consequently, at the start of the war the air defenses of the belligerents were inferior in their capabilities to the means of attack. Air defense forces were able to defend only the most important objectives, and even then could not provide complete defense. They could inflict some losses on enemy aircraft, but they were unable to offer reliable cover to troop groupings and to repel massed enemy attacks made against a number of cities, railroad junctions, and naval bases at the same time.

Air defense in Poland and France. The most important mission of the Polish and French air defense systems at the start of the war was to repel attacks by fascist German aviation and to protect and preserve objectives that came under attack. However, experience showed that such a mission was beyond the air defenses of these nations. The Hitlerite air force's invasion into the airspace of its enemies did not encounter organized resistance from air defense resources. The Hitlerites succeeded in reaching the designated targets almost unchallenged and in neutralizing them without serious losses of their own. The very weak resistance of the Polish and French air defenses against the enemy aircraft was explained because at the start of military operations the main means of resistance, fighter aviation, was virtually put out of action after the first massed air attacks against the airfields.

By the start of the war Poland had about 400 fighter aircraft for air defense,[20] while France had 350 to 400.[21] On the first day of the attack by the Hitlerite air force, Polish aviation lost a large part of its fighter aircraft.

From 10 May through 4 June 1940 Anglo–French aviation losses from enemy air attacks against the airfields were 1,600 to 1,700 aircraft.[22] This included the destruction of most of the fighter aircraft. To repel the massed attacks by the fascist German air force the allied command could have used up to 150 English fighter aircraft stationed in France.[23] But the English command shifted these forces to cover the evacuation of its expeditionary corps.

Poland and France were also unable more or less effectively to repel the massed attacks by Hitlerite aviation because in the air defenses of these countries the quantity of antiaircraft artillery did not correspond to the scale and type of the attacks.

In the estimate of the fascist German command, on the eve of the war the Polish air defense system had 200 heavy and 200 light antiaircraft guns of various calibers.[24] In actuality, by the start of the war Poland had 4 antiaircraft regiments covering Warsaw, Krakow, Wilno, and Grodno, a motorized battalion, and 2

to 3 independent batteries. In total, the Polish air defense system numbered 40 to 50 batteries of antiaircraft guns, 2 barrage balloon battalions, and 2 searchlight companies.[25]

Although France in 1939 had completely modern 75mm and 90mm antiaircraft guns with good fire control instruments, it had just seven antiaircraft regiments.[26] The situation was complicated because this sparse antiaircraft artillery was scattered organizationally. Part was under the command of the field armies, and part was under the command of the national air defenses. The organic antiaircraft artillery had been combined in three brigades. The antiaircraft artillery of the national air defenses was divided into internal and coastal, but in fact there was no internal artillery. It began formation only with the announcement of mobilization, and was put under control of the minister of aviation. The coastal antiaircraft artillery was under the naval minister.

Quite naturally, with such a number and with such a scattering of the antiaircraft artillery, the capabilities of the French air defenses to protect even the most important objectives were very limited.

On the whole, the Polish and French air defenses were unprepared to repel the first, strongest attacks by Hitlerite aviation and to protect the objectives subjected to air attack.

The fascist German air force, after winning air supremacy, made its attacks against intended objectives almost with impunity. In encountering very weak resistance, Hitlerite aviation thwarted operational transfers of the Polish army; after virtually paralyzing railroad operations, Hitlerite aviation relentlessly pursued the retreating Polish army and disorganized its rear. Even on the first day of the war, it bombed the capital of Poland, Warsaw, four times.

When the main antiaircraft forces of the French air defenses had been destroyed or neutralized in the border zone—where these defenses existed to a depth of just 15 to 20 km—there were not enough guns remaining to dependably defend even Paris.

As for the air defenses of the U.S. and its allies in the Pacific, these, like the air defenses of Poland and France, were too weak to resist the massed attacks by Japanese carrier- and shore-based aviation. In the Pacific, in essence, there was a repeat of the same events that comparatively recently had been played out in Europe. After suddenly unleashing military operations, Japanese aviation caused great damage to the allied fighter aviation on the ground. Allied aviation was virtually put out of action. Allied air defense units were unprepared to repel massed enemy air attacks. In addition, they were poorly equipped with weapons and other materiel. This helped Japanese aviation to seize air supremacy and to maintain it for a long time, making it possible for Japanese ground and naval forces to achieve major results in combat operations.

Specific features of the operations of the Soviet Union's air defense forces. With the start of the war the air defense forces' primary mission was to deploy their units as rapidly as possible and to get them ready to repel massed attacks by fascist German aviation. These two immediate missions were accomplished successfully, even though conditions were difficult with the sudden start of the war. By the morning of 22 June the antiaircraft air-defense units stationed in a zone at a depth of 200 to 250 km from the state border had been deployed according to peacetime levels and had taken up positions around objectives to be defended. Antiaircraft units further in the rear were deployed and brought to combat readiness somewhat later.

The duty air defense batteries in Moscow were combat ready by midday on 22 June. By the evening of the same day, another 102 batteries of the existing 137 took up their firing positions.[27] The entire Moscow air defense system was ready to repel enemy air attacks by the morning of 23 June, 24 hours after the start of the war.

However, during the first hours of the war only units kept at peacetime levels were deployed and brought to combat readiness. Deploying the air defense system in accord with the mobilization plan and bringing it to a state of full combat readiness required more time. Air defense units for installations in a 500- to 600-km zone along the western border, as well as the air defenses of Moscow, Baku, and other major centers in the country, were deployed and ready to repel enemy aircraft by the end of the second day of the war.

The surprise attack by fascist German aviation on cities and objectives along the border put the air defense forces in a difficult situation. During the first days the enemy was able to inflict considerable losses on our fighter aviation. Because of this, in a number of instances antiaircraft artillery had to repel enemy air attacks without support from our fighters.

The struggle waged by antiaircraft artillery against enemy aviation was complicated because many artillery units in the border area were forced to fight enemy ground forces and were thus diverted from carrying out their immediate missions for a certain time.

Because of a shortage of fighters and the primitive state of the air observation, warning, and communications forces, the situation frequently developed when antiaircraft artillery, which was also few in number, was practically the sole reliable means to counter enemy aviation.

During the first days of the war fascist German bombers frequently broke through to important installations in the rear and caused considerable damage to them. For example, on the southern strategic axis, particularly around Kovel and Chernovitsy, the enemy intensively bombed all our airfields and a number of cities and railroad junctions such as Lvov, Kiev, Odessa, Shepetovka, Stry,

Sambor, Peremyshl, Zhitomir, Korosten, Kazatin, Brody, Novograd-Volynskiy, and others.

However, despite the overall extremely bad situation that developed during the first days of the war, the air defense forces, particularly the antiaircraft artillery, met enemy aircraft with fierce resistance that had not been encountered before. On 22 June 1941 fascist German aircraft tried to attack the railroad junction at Kovel, which was covered by the 374th Antiaircraft Battalion. In approaching the target, enemy aircraft met precision firing from the batteries of this battalion. After losing 4 bombers, the enemy was forced to break off the mission. During the first 5 days of the war the battalion successfully repelled 10 group attacks and destroyed 12 German aircraft.[28]

The antiaircraft air defense artillery units that defended the cities of Stry, Stanislav, Ternopol, and Peremyshl shot down 30 fascist aircraft during just the first 3 days of the war.[29]

In the first days of the war fascist aviation made repeated attempts to destroy the major bridges across the Dnestr, Bug, and Dnepr rivers to prevent a systematic withdrawal by our forces. Thus, on 29 June 1941, 50 enemy aircraft tried to knock out the bridge over the Dnestr near Bender. And in the following days the enemy made dozens of attempts to destroy it, but the attacks on the bridge were unsuccessful. The 383rd Independent Antiaircraft Artillery Battalion covering the bridge succeeded in repelling 32 major attacks, shot down 15 enemy aircraft, and prevented the bridge's destruction.[30] Because of the air defense forces' selfless actions, the main bridges across the major water barriers were protected against destruction until the withdrawal of our units from the border regions to the rear lines.

Because of the energetic measures of the High Command Headquarters and of the staffs of field forces and formations, the air defense of the troops and of installations in the country's interior gradually took on a more organized character.

The enemy felt the increased strength of air defenses in the battles for Kiev.

Large numbers of men and amounts of equipment were assembled for the air defense of Kiev: more than 300 antiaircraft guns, 110 fighter aircraft, over 120 antiaircraft machine guns, 96 antiaircraft searchlights, 81 barrage balloons, and about 300 air observation, warning, and communciations posts.[31] To provide centralized control of these forces, the Kiev Air Defense Region was formed; it consisted of the 3rd Air Defense Division, the 36th Fighter Aviation Division, and units of organic antiaircraft artillery.[32] This made it possible to organize a unified system to protect the city from the air. Its effectiveness can be seen during the first 2 months of the war, when the forces of the Kiev Air Defense

Region destroyed 375 fascist aircraft, 283 of these were shot down by antiaircraft artillery."

The glorious combat deeds of the 7th Air Defense Brigade defending Minsk showed the strength of resistance by air defense forces on another axis, the Western. Starting on 23 June, this city repeatedly came under fierce enemy air attacks. During the first 3 days of combat the brigade shot down 13 enemy aircraft. In the fighting for Borisov, where the brigade had withdrawn by 26 June, it shot down another 11 aircraft and destroyed 9 enemy tanks. The 7th Air Defense Brigade took part in the Smolensk defensive operation and in the fighting near Vyazma and on the approaches to Moscow, destroying 165 German aircraft during that period.[34]

The increase in the air defense forces' efforts to combat enemy aircraft was particularly apparent in the defense of the two major centers of our country, Moscow and Leningrad. In character and scale, the combat operations of the air defense forces defending Moscow and Leningrad represented air defense operations, and as these operations were carried out the Hitlerite command's plan to wipe these cities off the face of the earth was thwarted.

From July through December 1941, in the operations areas of the air defense forces defending Moscow and Leningrad, about 18,000 flights by fascist German aircraft were recorded. Taking part in the fighting against the enemy aircraft were the forces of two air defense zones, the Moscow and Northern. These forces had over 1,800 antiaircraft guns and about 600 to 700 fighter aircraft. During the fighting more than 1,700 enemy aircraft were destroyed.[35]

Thus, at the start of the war the National Air Defense Forces, despite the exceptionally difficult combat conditions, withstood the first, strongest attacks by enemy aviation and secured the survival of the objectives being defended.

The cooperation between national air defense and organic air defense units developed and grew stronger in the struggle against fascist German aviation. In taking part in the struggle against enemy aviation, the air defense forces of the fronts and fleets thus helped national air defense units to protect objectives in the deep rear. At the same time, the National Air Defense Forces, in protecting these objectives, provided aid to the fronts and fleets in conducting operations.

* * *

The opposing sides entered World War II with limited and poorly developed air defense resources– especially air observation, warning, and communications equipment– whose performance capabilities were considerably inferior to those of the means of air attack. In the first operations in the west and in the Pacific the allied air defense was not able to repel surprise massed attacks by enemy aviation.

The virtual disablement of fighter aircraft at the start of the war, most of which were destroyed by enemy aircraft on the ground, seriously weakened the air defenses of nations subjected to aggression.

Despite the overall difficult situation and the considerable losses of men and equipment, the Soviet Union's air defense alone was able to withstand the first massed attacks by enemy aviation at the start of the war. Air defense forces in the west and in the Pacific essentially halted organized resistance during the first weeks of the war, while air defense on the Soviet–German Front, after withstanding enemy attacks, gradually gathered strength and put up a more organized resistance.

The initial period of the war showed that even in a situation when enemy aviation had overall air supremacy, it was possible to seize the initiative in conducting an air war on certain axes and combat enemy aviation quite effectively.

Notes

1 See *Voyennaya mysl'* [Military Thought], 1940, Nos. 11-12, p. 52. [Hereafter cited as *Military Thought*—U.S. Ed.]
2 Ibid.
3 Ibid.
4 See *50 Years of the USSR Armed Forces*, p. 259.
5 *Arkhiv MO SSSR* [USSR Ministry of Defense Archives], f. 35, op. 30799, d. 2, l. 41. [Hereafter cited as *Ministry of Defense Archives*—U.S. Ed.] [The preceding abbreviations are Soviet archival designations: f., archive; op., inventory; d., item; l., folio—U.S. Ed.]
6 See *Journal of Military History*, 1961, No. 3, p. 38.
7 Ibid., p. 39.
8 See *50 Years of the USSR Armed Forces*, p. 261.
9 See *Sovetskiye Vovenno Vozdushnyye Sily v Velikoy Otechestvennoy voyne 1941-1945 gg.* [The Soviet Air Force in the Great Patriotic War 1941-1945] (Moscow: Voyenizdat, 1968), p. 29. [Hereafter cited as *SAF in World War II*—U.S. Ed.]
10 *Ministry of Defense Archives*, f. 35, op. 30799, d. 1, l. 20-21.
11 Ibid., f. 362, op. 527080, d. 1, l. 25.
12 *Ministry of Defense Archives*, f. 35, op. 225930, d. 8, l. 100, 110.
13 Hayashi, p. 52.
14 See Sherman, pp. 18, 25.
15 See Butler and Gwyer, p. 231.
16 Ibid., p. 235.
17 See *Military Thought*, 1940, Nos. 11-12, p. 52.
18 See *SAF in World War II*, p. 29.
19 See *Pacific Campaigns*, pp. 28, 30.
20 See *Vestnik vozdushnogo flota* [Air Force Herald], 1939, No. 5, p. 25.
21 See *Foreign Military Journal*, 1938, No. 5, p. 80.
22 See *Vestnik protivovozdushnoy oborony* [Air Defense Herald], 1940, No. 7, p. 3. [Hereafter cited as *Air Defense Herald*—U.S. Ed.]
23 See Feuchter, p. 61. *riya vozdushnoy voyny v yeye proshlom, nastoyashchem i budushchem* [The History of Warfare Past, Present, and Future] (Moscow: Voyenizdat), 1956, p. 69. [Hereafter cited as Feuchter—U.S. Ed.]
24 See *Military Thought*, 1940, No. 7, p. 32.

26. Ibid., p. 67.
27. See *Air Defense Herald*, 1972, No. 1, p. 23.
28. See *Journal of Military History*, 1968, No. 3, p. 29.
29. Ibid.
30. Ibid.
31. *Ministry of Defense Archives*, f. 72, op. 34954, d. 7, l. 45; f. 131, op. 113360, d. 10, l. 11.
32. See *Journal of Military History*, 1968, No. 3, p. 31.
33. *Ministry of Defense Archives*, f. 72, op. 34954, d. 6, l. 183; op. 12310, d. 150, l. 10.
34. *Ministry of Defense Archives*, f. 72, op. 34961, d. 54, l. 444-445.
35. See *Air Defense Herald*, 1972, No. 1, p. 24.

Conclusion

World War II was an extremely complex and diverse social phenomenon. It consisted of a number of wars, each of which began and developed with both common and unique features. Dozens of nations participated in the wars that taken together formed World War II, including all of the main imperialist powers and a socialist country, the USSR. The military and economic potentials of these nations were far from equal and each of them pursued different political goals in the war. Finally, the powers taking part in the war occupied various geographic positions on the globe and, furthermore, entered the war with differing military theories and doctrines.

However, despite the unique wars that made up World War II, the period of each nation's entry into the war had common features. These common features were determined by persistent trends that had arisen in wars of the remote past and by specific historical conditions that saw the coming and unleashing of World War II.

Qualitatively new features of a war's initial period appeared with the creation and development of massive armies, when active combat operations began to be more extensively included in measures taken to prepare for decisive engagements. This gradually brought the moment of encounter between the main forces nearer to the start of war. The role of a war's initial period changed and took on new content.

At the start of the twentieth century the desire by belligerents to begin combat operations from the first days of an armed conflict underwent further development in the Russo-Japanese war. One of the remarkable features of this war was the conduct of extensive offensive and defensive battles on land and at sea from the start. The planning behind World War I showed that on the eve of the war the political and military leaders of the hostile groups were already linking their strategic calculations with the active conduct of combat operations at the start of the war. This would make possible the creation of conditions to achieve the war's final goals in the first operations. Nations such as Germany, France, and Russia attached decisive importance to the initial operations of their main forces. Although the actual course of events refuted these calculations, the idea of achieving a crushing defeat of the enemy in the initial operations continued to occupy the minds of many military leaders and theorists in the capitalist countries.

During the period between the two world wars, when new military theories and strategic concepts were formed under the influence of scientific and technical progress and the interpretation of the experience and lessons of World War I, avid proponents of this idea were found among the ruling circles of Germany, Italy, and Japan. In fact, it became the leading concept in the theories of total and blitzkrieg warfare prevalent in those nations. This was especially so, it seemed, because the rapid development of highly maneuverable types of combat equipment—tanks and aircraft—was opening up good prospects to achieve in initial operations those goals that had not been achieved in World War I. The strategic military aspect of these theories had to do precisely with putting into effect during the prewar period preparatory measures that in earlier times had constituted the main activity of the initial period of war. Now, at the start of a war, the maximum number of men and quantity of equipment would be concentrated in the first attack to deliver a crushing defeat to the enemy. These theories, consequently, emerged from recognition of the decisive importance of a war's initial operations. Reality showed, however, that these theories were invalid, since they were based on an exaggeration of the role of the initial period of war and on an underestimation of enemy military capabilities, morale, and determination.

On the other hand, an obvious underestimation of the role of the initial operations in a future war became widespread in the capitalist nations opposing the fascist bloc of nations. The "war-of-attrition" theory prevalent in the capitalist nations virtually limited the role of the initial period to the conduct of a static defense.

In the strategic calculations based on the war-of-attrition theory, the political and military leaders of the capitalist countries opposing fascist Germany and its allies gave prominence to "channeling" aggression to the east and to drawing the USSR into the war. It was assumed that the Soviet Union and Germany would both exhaust their resources in a fierce armed conflict, and that this could only benefit the western powers.

The views held by Soviet military leaders and theorists on the initial period essentially amounted to recognition of the increased importance—because of the development of such weapons as tanks and aircraft—of initial operations for the course and even the outcome of a war.

Many achievements of Soviet military theory were crystallized in this point of view on the initial period of war. These included such achievements as the fundamentally correct appraisal of the character of a future war and acknowledgement of the objective historical trend toward undertaking combat operations at the start of a war. Although certain aspects of Soviet theory on the initial period of war were not properly clarified, and while serious errors were made in preparing the armed forces to enter the war, the course and outcome of the Great Patriotic War convincingly demonstrated the progressive character of Soviet military theory.

The general characteristics of the initial period of each of the wars that made up World War II can be summarized in the following way:

In World War II the initial period constituted a definite and, as a rule, comparatively brief period filled with large-scale offensive and defensive operations in which all the armed forces' formations and field forces deployed by the start of the war participated to achieve immediate strategic goals. At the same time, the belligerent nations carried out a whole series of urgent measures to mobilize their domestic resources for war and strove to strengthen their international positions with a number of foreign policy actions that affected enemies, allies, and neutral nations.

The initial period of war mainly consisted of combat operations carried out through the joint efforts of all branches of the armed forces. The attacking side, which had fully mobilized and deployed its armed forces during the prewar period, used this period to carry out offensive operations with the immediate goal of destroying the forces in the enemy's first strategic echelon and creating the conditions for a victorious conclusion to the war. As a rule, nations subjected to surprise attack conducted difficult defensive engagements during this period—on land, at sea, and in the air—using forces of the first strategic echelon, under cover of which the mobilization, concentration, and deployment of forces in the second strategic echelon continued. The first engagements and operations became a harsh test of prewar theoretical views, strategic plans, and calculations, and of the combat, morale, and political conditioning of the armed forces for military operations.

The accelerated accomplishment of military and economic mobilization plans was an organic part of the initial period of the war. This was seen in the removal of equipment and technology from industry, transport, and agriculture and their transfer to the armed forces to equip the formations and field forces deployed at the start of the war. In addition, in most nations the economy was undergoing conversion to expanded production of combat equipment and weapons, and financial, material, and human resources were redistributed among the various sectors of the economy. The operations of all types of transport, communications, and so forth underwent considerable reorganization. Only in the aggressor nations were such measures not carried out at this time, since most of them had been carried out before the war began.

It was typical domestic policy in nations that entered the war to put all domestic affairs on a war footing. An important role was assigned to immediate measures to strengthen a nation's internal security and to increase the morale and psychological conditioning of the population to bear the burdens of war.

Fearing the intensification of social conflicts, the governments of capitalist nations, in which elements of bourgeois democracy still existed, abridged the democratic rights of the workers and increased their repression of progressive

forces, especially of the communist parties. In the fascist bloc of nations, where the communist parties and other progressive political organizations of workers had been disbanded or been driven underground and their best leaders physically destroyed or placed behind bars, the governments conducted unrestrained anticommunist and chauvinistic propaganda, masking their criminal goals in the war.

In the initial period of the war the Communist Party of the Soviet Union carried out the work of mobilizing all of the people to repel the enemy with the just goals of liberating the nation from the invaders and delivering the peoples of Europe from fascist oppression. Great attention was devoted to increasing vigilance and discipline and developing hatred for the enemy. The party reorganized the work of government control organs to accomplish these tasks.

The foreign policies of the various governments took on a special character with the start of the war. Efforts were aimed at determining the positions of belligerent and neutral nations and at revealing genuine allies and possible new enemies. Nations entering the war took steps to create new military coalitions or to expand existing ones. The foreign policy programs of nations entering the war and their true political goals were clearly revealed during the first days of the war, and the real attitude of nations toward their commitments to alliances, as set forth in prewar agreements, was also tested.

The initial period of the war was thus an exceptionally complex process of the entry of nations into armed conflict. This process was characterized by the accomplishment of closely related and extremely urgent military, political, and economic tasks.

Specific features of the initial period in World War II were clearly revealed in the conduct of the first campaigns and operations, both offensive and defensive.

Initial offensive operations. The planning and the conduct of offensive operations completely clearly revealed the desire of the aggressor nations to determine in advance the outcome of the war with a single campaign or even a single strategic operation. Like the Japanese militarists, Hitler's strategists set the immediate strategic goal of rapidly defeating the enemy's first strategic echelon.

From 50 to 80 percent of all of the men and equipment on hand at the start of the war were usually drawn on to achieve this goal. The main mass of the men and equipment, including the tank forces, went into the first strategic echelons. The massing of men and equipment to make the first attack led to the creation of overwhelming superiority over the enemy on the main axes and, as a rule, to rapid penetration of enemy defenses to a great depth. This in turn created favorable conditions for maneuver in the operational depth. Great attention was devoted to achieving surprise in the first attacks.

Cutting off or enveloping (sometimes with a double envelopment) major strategic enemy groupings, with their simultaneous fragmentation and destruction piecemeal, were the basic forms of operational-strategic maneuver. Tank and motorized units, operating in compact groupings, had the main role in encircling large enemy forces. The elimination of encircled forces was assigned to field armies.

Strategic offensive operations on the continent reached depths of 300 to 600 km, with fronts extending 400 to 600 km or more. The average daily rate of advance on the axes of the main attacks was 15 to 30 km. The tank forces advanced at rates of 40 to 60 km a day.

A characteristic feature of operations by the Japanese armed forces at the start of the war was that they carried out deep strategic offensive operations of tremendous scope in naval theaters of operations. These operations were conducted through the joint efforts of all branches of the armed forces, the main role being played by the navy. All of the Japanese forces deployed on the eve of the war typically entered engagements in the initial period simultaneously in the naval theaters.

The Japanese navy gained sea supremacy during the first days of the war by making surprise massed air attacks against the enemy's main naval forces. The strategic offensive developed in a number of simultaneous and consecutive operations that included the landing of naval and airborne assault forces on Pacific islands and on the eastern and southeastern coasts of the Asian continent. The offensive was carried out quickly.

Initial offensive operations in the continental and naval theaters of operations were characterized by the defeat of major strategic groupings of enemy forces and the seizure of vast territories. Even large nations, falling under surprise massed enemy attacks, found themselves in an extremely serious situation and overcame their initial setbacks with difficulty.

Initial defensive operations. The combat activity of the armed forces of the nations subjected to aggression began with defensive engagements. In most situations these nations did not have defensive lines prepared in advance on the axes of the enemy's main attacks. Nor did they have groups of forces deployed in time and capable of withstanding the aggressor's invasion. When the aggressor did encounter previously prepared defensive lines—for example, the Maginot Line—they proved to be on secondary axes as a rule. The enemy bypassed these positions.

The defensive operations resulted in great losses of men and materiel. It was possible to weaken a strong enemy's offensive capabilities and ultimately to halt its advance only after the entry into battle of major strategic reserves.

Nations with relatively limited territory and inadequate forces, such as Poland, Belgium, and Holland, were rapidly defeated. France's strategic defense was also quickly crushed. To a considerable degree this was caused by errors committed in deploying its main forces and by a shortage of major strategic reserves.

It was only on the Soviet-German Front that the German fascist command was not able to overwhelm the strategic defense. By mid July 1941, with the introduction of strategic reserves into battle, the Soviet command was able to temporarily stabilize the defensive front on the most important strategic axes. This was of tremendous importance for thwarting plans for a blitzkrieg.

Soviet forces carried out the strategic defense in a difficult situation at a time when their strategic deployment had not been completed, enemy aviation dominated the air, major enemy tank groupings were rapidly penetrating the deep rear, and the limited maneuvering capabilities of the Red Army's formations because of a low level of motorization and pressure from Hitler's aviation prevented the timely elimination of enemy breakthroughs. The persistence and mass heroism of Soviet forces were a powerful factor in overcoming these extremely difficult conditions. By the end of the first defensive operations the enemy had suffered considerable losses. The enemy's advance was steadily slackening. At the start of the second month of war the fascist German army was forced to go over to the defensive on a number of axes, including, what was especially important, the main, Moscow strategic axis.

A high level of combat activity by units and formations was one of the distinguishing features of our strategic defense. Wherever possible, Soviet forces carried out counterattacks, conducted an active struggle when encircled, and maneuvered skillfully to escape from encirclement; when necessary they withdrew to intermediate positions or concentrated on the flanks of enemy groupings that had broken through. Intermediate or rear defensive lines were set up during battles and operations, and were occupied in advance by strategic reserves moved up from the nation's interior.

At the same time, counterattacks organized by the Soviet command did not always produce the desired results. Counterattacks carried out during the first days of the war on the northwestern and western axes, for example, did not achieve their goal. The enemy repelled them, regrouped its forces, and continued to develop the offensive.

Experience showed that it was extremely difficult to recapture the strategic initiative lost to the enemy at the start of the war. A number of conditions were necessary to accomplish this mission successfully: in particular, correct appraisal of the situation, selection of the most favorable moment for making the retaliatory attack, and concentration of superior forces on the axis where the attack was planned.

The initial defensive operations in the naval theaters of operations were unique because these operations unfolded over huge expanses. After Japan's seizure of absolute air and sea supremacy, the American and British commands were deprived of the possibility of conducting the mobile defense called for in their original plans. From the first days of the war the allied defensive combat operations were concentrated in centers of resistance and, moreover, were unorganized. Cooperation between naval, air, and ground forces was disrupted. Attempts by the allied command to organize operations against landing forces at the most important strategic points met with failure. It was only toward the end of the fifth month of war that the U.S. was in a position to halt the enemy's advance.

The initial operations showed that their success depended on winning air supremacy in the first days of the war.

Dominating the air, the aggressor's aviation reliably covered friendly troops and made effective attacks against the enemy, its communications, railroad terminals, highway junctions, and control points. In particular, this resulted in disorganization of command and control and the disruption of troop regroupings and the transfer of reserves from the interior.

From the start of the war surprise massed air attacks against enemy airfields were the main means of winning air supremacy. The initial success was strengthened by using ground forces to seize areas in which enemy aviation was based. After winning air supremacy the main mass of the air force was assigned to support the operations of ground and naval forces.

The war showed that the role of air defense in initial operations had increased considerably. At the same time, it was revealed that air defense was poorly prepared to repel the first massed enemy air attacks. This was because the effectiveness of such attacks had been underestimated. Furthermore, air defense weapons lagged considerably behind air attack weapons.

A number of the first campaigns showed that a blitzkrieg victory could be achieved in the initial period only over a militarily and economically weak enemy with limited territory and lacking high morale, political unity, and the will to fight until the end. When large nations (or coalitions of nations) with great military and economic potential, vast territory, and, especially important, tremendous morale and political potential entered the war against the aggressor, blitzkrieg warfare failed entirely, even when the aggressor achieved important strategic results in the initial period. However, the consequences of the first massed attacks were extremely serious even for large nations; for some—France, for example—they were catastrophic.

The initial period of the war confirmed the completely natural existence along with the offensive of strategic operations like the strategic defense. At the same time, it introduced many new features into the strategic defense.

The war rejected the conduct of a strategic defense consisting of static forms alone when an advancing enemy employed aviation and airborne forces with a huge radius of action and tank formations with great mobility. The war demanded an optimal combination of static defense with battles of maneuver, relying on a system of defensive zones and lines developed in advance along the front and in the depth. A stable defense proved unthinkable without major antiaircraft and antitank reinforcements. Perhaps the most instructive lesson learned from the initial period of the war, however, was the need to conduct an active strategic defense. In the last war only a combination of determined retention of defensive zones and lines and a large number of powerful counterattacks, operational counteroffensives, and individual offensive operations brought success to the defending side and created the conditions necessary to seize the strategic initiative.

The initial operations showed that the buildup and use of strategic reserves was necessary to provide an active strategic defense. Their role in strategic defense increased greatly.

The initial period clearly showed a persistent trend to shift preparatory measures for conducting the first operations, including mobilization and strategic deployment of the armed forces, beyond the limits of the war itself to the prewar period.

The initial period of the war was also instructive because it revealed the desire of the aggressor nations to include as many men and as much equipment as possible in the first attack to achieve immediate strategic goals, including air supremacy and supremacy at sea in the naval theaters.

Initial operations once again confirmed the tendencies of powers taking the initiative in unleashing war to make surprise attacks of maximum force against an enemy from the start. To ensure surprise in the attack, governments and military control organs in the aggressive nations used all means and methods against the enemy, including political, diplomatic, and military actions, if only to conceal the real plan and time to unleash aggression.

Initial offensive operations were characterized by a sharp increase in their scope and dynamic nature, the employment of all branches of the armed forces, and the use of the most decisive forms of conducting operations: strategic fronts were split; large groups of forces encircled; deep envelopments were made with mobile formations, airborne and naval assault forces; and so forth.

Offensive and defensive operations in the initial period of the war showed firm and continuous command and control to be of paramount importance for the success of combat operations. In an extremely complex and rapidly changing situation any weakening or loss of command and control cost that side dearly which delayed in restoring the disrupted system of strategic and operational control.

Finally, the initial period of the war revealed the greatly increased importance of morale and political factors, and, in particular, of the troops' psychological conditioning for the course and outcome of initial operations. Entering the war entailed a serious testing of the morale of the population and the army of each of the belligerents. It invariably required basic adjustments in the consciousness and conduct of the people, both of those remaining in the rear to work to meet war needs and of those who took up arms. This resulted in political mobilization of the masses on an especially broad scale to achieve the intended goals in the war.

With the start of combat operations by the Soviet Armed Forces the Communist Party launched a tremendous political campaign to explain the noble goals of the Great Patriotic War and its just nature to strengthen in the Soviet people—soldiers on the front and workers in the rear—important moral-political qualities such as love for the Motherland and a readiness to defend with their lives the great achievements of the October Revolution. Much attention was devoted to the development of fierce hatred for the fascist invaders and to the establishment of steadfast confidence in victory over the enemy. The AUCP(b) Central Committee made direct appeals to the people, and the press, radio, and all forms of art were called on for the political mobilization of the nation and its Armed Forces to overcome the difficulties of the initial period and to organize a crushing rebuff to the aggressors.

In the initial period of the war the Communist Party served as a great guiding, organizing, and mobilizing force in the national struggle against the fascist invasion.

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Almost three decades have gone by since World War II ended. The tremendous political and socioeconomic advances that have come about since then have fundamentally changed the arrangement and balance of power in the world.

A world socialist system has been formed. Steadily developing and gaining strength, it is having an ever-increasing influence on the world revolutionary process. The proletariat's class awareness is increasing in all of the capitalist nations. It is becoming more and more determined in its struggle against the

imperialist policy of the national and international bourgeoisie and is leading an active struggle for its political and economic rights. Imperialism's worldwide colonial system has collapsed. Dozens of new nations have set out on the path of independent political and economic development.

A trend toward consolidation of all anti-imperialist forces is growing and expanding in the world. All of this bears witness to the continued intensification of the capitalist system's general crisis.

The start of the 1970's marked an important turning point in the international situation. The increasing power of the Soviet Union and the other socialist nations and the development of a powerful movement for international security among the broad popular masses have led to collapse of the imperialist policy of operating "from a position of strength." There is a clear tendency toward a lessening of international tension and toward a greater acceptance of the principles of peaceful coexistence between countries with different social structures.

The profound sociopolitical advances now taking place in the world and the decreased danger of a nuclear war are opening up new prospects for strengthening international security. There are still forces in the imperialist nations, however, capable of unleashing new military ventures.

This makes it necessary to exercise great vigilance against the intrigues of international reaction and to maintain the armed forces of the socialist community of nations at a high level of combat readiness.

"We take into account the lessons of the past," said General Secretary of the CPSU Central Committee L. I. Brezhnev at a joint formal session of the CPSU Central Committee, the USSR Supreme Soviet, and the RSFSR Supreme Soviet devoted to the 50th anniversary of Soviet power, "and we are doing everything possible to make certain that no one catches us unprepared."[1]

Inspired by the historic decisions of the 24th Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, the Soviet people today are working with unprecedented enthusiasm to bring to life the grand program worked out by the party for our Motherland's continued progress toward communism. The Soviet Armed Forces guard the peaceful creative labor of the Soviet people, and are prepared to repel an enemy attack at any hour of the day or night from wherever it might arise.

Notes

1. L. I. Brezhnev, *Leninskim kursom. Rechi i stat'i* [Following Lenin's Course: Speeches and Articles] (Moscow: Politizdat, 1970), II, 129.

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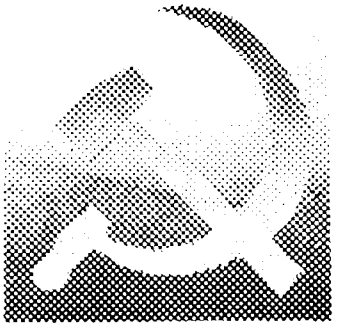

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